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The Ethnicity of Memory: Ethnic Koreans in Northeastern China, 1931-1953

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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This MA thesis traces how "ethnic Koreans" in northeastern China (*chaoxianzu*) reshaped their perception(s) of "ethnicity" over the course of the great political and social upheavals from Manchukuo to the People's Republic of China. By looking into less-explored memoirs and oral histories, this research is interested in dissecting the interrelations between memory-formation and ethnic imagination. Chapter 1 lays the theoretical groundwork for my memory-centered approach, through which I historicize the ethnic Koreans' conceptualization(s) of "ethnicity" as a *process*, rather than a self-evident precondition. Chapter 2 reveals the ethnic Koreans' ambiguous and fluid sense of ethnicity under Manchukuo's ideology of *minzu xiehe* (concordia of ethnos). Chapter 3 examines the cultural construction of "Korean ethnicity" advocated by the Chinese Communist Party during the Chinese civil war. Chapter 4 investigates the contestations between the Party-state's revolutionary narrative and the bottom-up ethnic discourse in the early socialist era. This thesis argues that memory comes to be a mediator

reifying the fluid, contingent, and sometimes-contested process of ethnic imagination in between the boundaries of nation-states.

The thesis of Tianxin Peng is approved.

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Introduction

On February 16, 2021, *The Global Times*, a notorious ultranationalist unit of the Chinese government's mouthpiece, published an article titled, "A South Korean Professor Requests to Change a Chinese Ethnic Korean Poet's Nationality to South Korean," which immediately became a trending hashtag on Weibo, the Chinese Twitter, and reignited the cultural war between China and South Korea since the Koguryŏ controversy in 2002.[1] The debate germinated from an appeal that a South Korean professor, Seo Kyoung-duk, sent to Baidu, the Chinese equivalent of Google, to change its claim about Yun Dong-ju—a preeminent Korean poet in the estimation of the South Korean public—being of Chinese nationality and ethnically *Chaoxianzu* 朝鮮族 (ethnic Korean minority in China). The Chinese side seems to be supported by substantive evidence—the historical fact that both sides could not deny is that Yun Dong-ju was born in 1917 in a small village of Longjing county, which belongs to the present-day Yanbian region in northeastern China. If so, one might wonder if Yun was born in the territory of China, why would it be controversial to claim his ethnic identity as *Chaoxianzu* under the umbrella of the Chinese nation?

In either the Chinese or Korean context, ethnicity and nationality are designated by an ill-defined term, *minzu* (*minjok*), which is at the center of the debate. South Korean scholars contend that since Yun's family had originally relocated from the Korean peninsula, Yun is a descendant from the "Korean bloodline." Culturally, they believe that given the fact that Yun wrote all his

[1] Koguryŏ is an ancient kingdom that ruled the northern Korean peninsula, as well as the southeastern part of Manchuria, from the 1st century BCE to the 7th century CE, which has long been treated by scholars in the two Koreas, and also the rest of the world, as part of the history of Korea. The Koguryŏ controversy, as the first and foremost instance of the cultural dispute between China and South Korea, resulted from a research project launched by the Chinese government in 2002, the Northeast Project, which claims the history of Koguryŏ belongs to the history of the "Chinese nation." More on this controversy below.

poems in the Korean language and actively participated in the Korean independence movement, it is senseless to label Yun as a *minzu* under China. However, if one closely traces the history, the debate becomes very complicated. After Japan annexed Korea in 1910, the Korean immigrants flooding into Manchuria were lawfully assumed to be Japanese subjects, although oftentimes in reality were treated as stateless by Chinese local administrations. According to China's nationality law in the early Republican era, Yun could be granted Chinese nationality since he was born on Chinese territory. But as the subsequent Nationalist government supported the Korean government-in-exile during the Sino-Japanese War, the Korean-lineage inhabitants in China became expatriates of a foreign nation until 1949.[2] Despite the multiple labels for Yun's nationality, more importantly, how fit is the term, *Zhongguo chaoxianzu* (Chinese ethnic Korean), a category not created until socialist China's *minzu* classification project in the early 1950s, as a label for the identity of Yun, as well as the millions of "Korean expatriates" in northeastern China?

Such inquiry touches upon the crux of the cultural debate between China and South Korea over not only Yun Dong-ju but also various cultural representations such as Kimchi or Hanbok, that is, the terminological dilemma of *minzu*. The essentialist definition of *minzu* turns out to be ambiguous and can even be internally contradictory.[3] For Yun's controversy, it is the criteria of *minzu* that is in question: when conditions such as birthplace, lineage, language, and

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[2] In the official documents of the Nationalist government, the Korean inhabitants in China are termed, *hanqiao* 韓僑 (Korean expatriates), or, occasionally, as *chaoxianren* 朝鮮人 (Korean people). See the National Government of the Republic of China Collection in Academia Sinica. In reality, the term *hanqiao* reflects the Nationalist government's policy that treated them as non-Chinese nationals, partly because of its recognition of the Korean Provisional Government, the Korean government-in-exile founded in 1919 in Shanghai.

[3] In the present-day language usage of either China or South Korea, *minzu*/*minjok* is semantically defined by several observable criteria. In South Korea, the *Standard Korean Language Dictionary* determines *minjok* by the criteria of "certain territory," "collective living," "commonality of language and culture," and "historical development." In the PRC, Joseph Stalin's four "commonalities"—common territory, common language, common economic mode of production, and common psychology or culture—have largely influenced China's official definition of *minzu*. See Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan yuyan yanjiusuo cidian bianjishi, *Xiandai hanyu cidian*, 884.

culture are inconsistent with each other, which one should be given priority? In his study of the 1954 Minzu Classification Project in Yunnan Province, Thomas S. Mullaney shows that the *minzu* taxonomy in the PRC era is inextricable from both China's *longue durée* transition from empire to nation-state in ethnopolitical terms and Republican China's social science discipline, which was influenced by western colonialism. As Mullaney points out, the definitional ambiguity of *minzu*, nation, and ethnicity, as well as the efforts to standardize these terms—a significant part of the Sino-Korean cultural war—embodies "a fundamental part of the history of social sciences, the modern state, and the ongoing collaboration there-between."[4]

Given the contradictions within the objectivist definition of *minzu*, we might wonder how historical agents, the people who fell into the category of *chaoxianzu*, conceptualized their ethnic identity: this is the main purpose of this research. Turning away from the objectivist understanding of *minzu*, however, is not to invalidate the roles of the Party-state or ethnologists, but to discover the agency of people from the "periphery" in shaping how the history of modern China should be narrated. The historical moments of "contemporary China," only decades ago from the present, are rarely dead facts *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, but are still vivid in people's memories and interact with them.[5] In this sense, adopting an individualized and bottom-up understanding of "ethnic identity" shifts our attention from the socialization of knowing to that of remembering, leading us to the realm of memory studies. Accordingly, this thesis, under the title of "The Ethnicity of Memory," explores the interrelations between memory-formation and

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[4] Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation*, 15-16. The definitional dilemma of either "nation" or "ethnicity" leads to chaos in translation as well. There are ongoing debates about whether to use *minzu*, *guozu* 國族, *zuqun* 族群, or zuyi 族裔 among scholars in both China and Taiwan. For further discussion on the notion of "ethnicity," see Chapter 1.

[5] "*Wie es eigentlich gewesen*" is a phrase used by German historian Leopold von Ranke, the founder of modern "scientific" historiography, to stress that the past should not be distorted by the present. There are some disagreements around how this phrase should be translated into English, but common translations include "what actually happened," "as it essentially was," or "as it really was." See Gilbert, "Historiography."

ethnic imagination.[6] This research will show that studying the memories of the ethnic Korean minority in northeastern China does not merely tease out the voices of marginalized groups in the Han-dominant Chinese historiography, but also demonstrates the fluid, contingent, and contested history, or historical memory, in between the boundaries of nation-states.

The Making of the Manchurian Myth: a literature review

Although Manchuria remains a contested region, in China and the two Koreas, historical narratives about Korean communities in twentieth-century Manchuria mainly comply with the "Manchurian myth"—the paradigm of anti-Japanese resistance under which all people in northeastern China were unified, regardless of ethnicity, class, or gender. This historical myth was first, and perhaps most prominently, presented in the official ideology of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The legend of Kim Il Sung, as the founder of North Korea, starts from his early leadership in anti-Japanese guerilla struggle based in Manchuria. Moreover, as Kim Il Sung chose his son, Kim Jong Il, to be his heir, the history of Koreans' anti-Japanese resistance in Manchuria was solidly integrated into the center of the Kim family's ruling legitimacy, as well as the founding mythology of the North Korean state.[7] In North Korean historiography, overshadowed by the aura of Great Leader Kim Il Sung, the Korean emigrants in pre-1945 Manchuria simply constitute the core of the Manchurian revolution so central to regime's founding myth.[8]

[6] The title of this thesis, "The Ethnicity of Memory," expresses my salute to Gail Hershatter's work, *The Gender of Memory*, which largely inspired my thinking on the topic of memory and history. More discussions on the relation between this thesis and Hershatter's study will continue in Chapter 1.
[7] Armstrong, "Centering the Periphery."
[8] For North Korea's "Manchurian myth," see Wada, *Kita chōsen*; Armstrong, *North Korean Revolution*.

In the People's Republic of China, the historical narrative about the Koreans in northeastern China is committed to the paradigm of the "Manchurian myth" in a no less authoritative voice. As part of the new state's nation-wide research project of ethnic minority groups, the Jilin Province historical research team completed the first monograph on the history of ethnic Koreans, *Chaoxianzu jianshi* (A Brief History of Ethnic Koreans), in 1959, but did not publish it until 1986. This state-sponsored work establishes the most orthodox line for narrating the history of Koreans in northeastern China:[9]

> Our country faces Korea across [two] rivers. In the early 18th century, Korean peasants… entered our country, and during the process of developing the northeastern frontier together with all ethnic peoples and carrying out anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggle, became an ethnic minority group of our country—*chaoxianzu*. (*Chaoxianzu jianshi*, 2009)

This brief summary outlines the key themes of ethnic Korean history, development, and struggle. The facet of struggle, however, is clearly more highlighted in this book, as the chapters are organized by the topics of "anti-feudal struggle," "anti-warlord struggle," "anti-Japanese struggle," etc. Overall, under the doctrine of "struggle history," the book *Chaoxianzu jianshi* provides more ideological symbolism than historiographical value.

Another comprehensive work on the history of Koreans in northeastern China came out in 2009 under the name, *Zhongguo Chaoxianzu yimin shi* (The Emigration History of Chinese Ethnic Koreans). Written twenty years after the *Jianshi,* this book proposes several new

[9] Jin, "Chaoxianzu lishi yanjiu gaishu," 4.

historical interpretations. As the title itself implies, *Yimin shi* put more emphasis on the dimension of emigration instead of revolutionary struggle. The author, Sun Chunri, uses sources from South Korea and Japan and takes bold steps to challenge many prevalent views, including regarding Korean emigration during the Ming era, the collaborative relationship between Korean emigrants and the Japanese authority, and the Nationalist government's assistance to Korean peasants during the civil war, etc. Although this shift from "struggle history" to "emigration history" highlights a bottom-up approach to some degree, the dominant perspective in *Yimin shi* still caters to the Party-state's discourse of assimilation and ethnic unity.

Outside of China, the history of the Koreans in northeastern China remains largely an untold story. The conference volume, *Koreans in China* (1990), is likely the most comprehensive work so far in the English language on the history of *chaoxianzu*. The editors Dae-sook Suh and Edward J. Shultz admit in the preface that many among the contributors from China "often express a positive judgement of the measures taken by the Chinese government… and at times imply the superiority of the Chinese socialist system."[10] The chapter on ethnic Korean history is written by Piao Changyu (Pak Ch'ang-ok), one of the chief editors of *Jianshi*, and yet presents different arguments from the state-controlled history in China. Piao argues that the history of Korean settlement in Manchuria should be traced back thousands of years, which implicitly connects *chaoxianzu* more with the "Korean nation" in the peninsula.[11] Furthermore, Piao boldly states that the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggles of ethnic Koreans belong both to the Chinese

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[10] Suh and Shultz, *Koreans in China*, ix.

[11] Piao, "The History of Koreans in China and the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture." Piao Changyu (Pak Ch'ang-ok, 朴昌昱) is among the most preeminent first-generation historians in China studying the history of ethnic Koreans. His teacher when he studied history in Yanbian University, Chi Hee-gyŏm 池喜謙, was one of the major figures in the Korean self-government in Yanbian after 1945. Both Chi and Pak participated in the writing of *Jianshi*, but it is interesting to see how their own works sometimes present "nationalist" historical views contradicting the official discourse. I speculate that Piao is the same person as Pak (Yanbian) in my following chapters. More discussions on Pak's story will be provided in chapters 2 through 4.

history of liberation struggle and the Korean history of national independence—"one history with two applications" (*yishi liangyong*, 一事兩用), as Piao calls it. Piao's revisionist view immediately influenced the prevalent historical narratives about *chaoxianzu* in South Korea and the West starting in the 1990s.

Although the South Korean authoritarian regime during the Cold War era intentionally remained reticent about the history of Koreans in Manchuria, countering the propagandizing of North Korea, democratization since 1987 ignited historians' passion in "re-discovering" Manchuria as a "space of national resistance."[12] This nationalist discourse on a transnational Korean anti-Japanese movement, as another version of the "Manchurian myth," turns *chaoxianzu* from members within the "Chinese family" into a part of the contemporary Korean diaspora, with the new ethnonym, "Koreans in China" (*Jejung Hanin*, 在中韓人). While most of the studies focus primarily on the anti-Japanese struggles, Yŏm In-ho's 2010 *Tto hana ŭi Han'guk Chŏnjaeng* (Another Korean War) centers on the Chinese Civil War period. In terms of approach, Yŏm unequivocally expresses his opposition to the *Jianshi*-like historical view of ethnic Koreans subsumed under the "Chinese family," and he agrees with Piao Changyu in establishing connections between *chaoxianzu* and the "Korean nation" in the peninsula.[13] Thus, even though Yŏm makes use of various unexplored primary sources, his perspective remains noticeably handicapped by his nationalist insistence on the "patriotism" (*choguksim*, 祖國心) of *chaoxianzu* to Korea, which reifies "ethnicity" as a self-evident concept.

[12] For the "Manchurian fever" among South Korean historians from the 1990s onward, see Sin, *Manju chiyŏk Hanin ŭi minjok undongsa (1920-45)*; Chang, *Chungguk tongbuk chiyŏk minjok undong kwa Han'guk hyŏndaesa*; Kim, *Jejung Hanin ijusa yongu*.
[13] Yŏm, *Tto hana ŭi Han'guk Chŏnjaeng*, 27-31.

Recently, there has been a rise in western historians' interest in the history of ethnic Koreans beyond the borders of the Koreas. Adam Cathcart's article, "Nationalism and Ethnic Identity in the Sino-Korean Border Region of Yanbian, 1945–1950" (2010), by situating ethnic Koreans in the complex relations with the PRC and North Korea, provides a pioneering study that questions the essentialized notion of ethnicity in the history of ethnic Koreans. Hyun-Ok Park's *Two Dreams in One Bed* (2005) analyzes the social, mostly economic, relations of Koreans with Japanese and Chinese in early twentieth-century Manchuria. Deviating from the mainstream trend of ethnopolitical studies, Park underscores the role of global capitalism as the "bed" drawing "together colonialists and their nationalist counterparts to work for a common goal," which, however, Koreans in Manchuria failed to achieve.[14] Park's sociological perspective debunks the "repression-resistance" binary between Manchurian Koreans and Japanese colonialism, while meanwhile leaving the notion of ethnicity intact.

This primary goal of this study is to problematize the notion of ethnicity, or *minzu*, as a priori. In other words, as this thesis will reveal, the conceptualization of the identity of Koreans who lived in territories now within the national boundaries of the PRC is a complex, contested, and contingent historical process. For the sake of convenience, this study adopts the term "ethnic Korean" as the English translation of "chaoxianzu," and yet it makes no attempt to presume the ethnicity for the Korean-lineage people in northeastern China. Assuming that the Korean emigrants in Manchuria always unmistakably perceived themselves as "Korean," as the prevailing nationalist historiographies in current North and South Korea do, however, lead us to a hermeneutic paradox—because they are Korean, they participated in the anti-Japanese struggle, which, in turn, is used to prove their "patriotism" as Korean. Similarly, applying the PRC state's

[14] Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed*, 1.

category of *chaoxianzu* to support its ethnopolitical claim of minority assimilation into the "Chinese family" falls into the trap of historical teleology and negation of bottom-up agency. In contrast, this research rejects the objective criteria for assigning one ethnic identity or teleological implication of one's ethnic identity, either of "chaoxianzu" or of "Korean expatriates." Instead, it seeks to historize the process of ethnic imagination from the voices of the historical agents themselves.

Sources and Structure

This research, moving beyond the existing historical studies on ethnic Koreans in China, will adopt a memory-centered approach by relying primarily on memoirs and oral histories. The materials analyzed in this thesis come from publications both from China and South Korea. The two-volume compilation by South Korean researchers, *Kiŏk sok ŭi Manjuguk* (Manchukuo in Memories), collects valuable oral history materials from ethnic Korean "seniors" (*wŏllo*, 元老) in northeastern China. Although the first names of the interviewees are concealed by the editors, from their stories we can conclude that these "seniors" mainly refer to the ethnic Koreans born between the 1920s and the 1930s, who spent their childhood under Manchukuo and later became officials in the PRC Party-state. The research team consists of several professors from Kyungsung University in South Korea. Carried out in 2005, this research originally responded to the massive "investigating pro-Japanese acts" movement in South Korea and aimed to collect testimonies from Korean collaborators in Manchuria. But the oral materials collected turned out to be rich historical sources regarding the experiences of ethnic Koreans from the Manchukuo era to the early socialist years.

Another key primary source for this study comes from a series of memoir collections titled, *Chungguk Chosŏnjok ryŏksa paljach'wi* (Chinese Ethnic Koreans' Footprints in History). The series contains eight volumes and covers the period from the late Qing to the 1980s. The compilation was primarily completed by the same research team for *Jianshi*, consisting of high-ranking *chaoxianzu* officials and university professors.[15] As supplement to *Jianshi*, *Footprints* was instructed to record testimonies of the revolutionary struggles of ethnic Koreans, as a "model minority" within the history of their unambiguous motherland, China.[16] These memoir materials, although replete with traces of the official narrative, offer detailed, first-hand, less-addressed accounts about the experiences of ethnic Korans from the civil war through the years of high socialism in China. By comparing these official narratives with the individual accounts of suffering, we can explore how the paradigm of "model minority" traumatizes ethnic Koreans' memories of socialist China. Other memoir materials the paper uses range from local *Wenshi ziliao* (Literary and Historical Materials) articles to local gazetteers, as well as other memoirs and oral histories published in South Korea.

The "authenticity" of these sources, written by individual nobodies, have long been questioned by positivist historians because they cannot be cross-referenced. However, by exploring these individuals' accounts, this research paper not only aims to emphasize the agency of individuals from below but, more importantly, as further discussed in the following section, focuses more on the complex process through which ethnic Koreans' imagination of group

[15] Pak Mun-il, the chancellor of Yanbian University, was appointed as the chief editor (in the PRC often this honorary title is given to the highest ranking official of the institution) of *The Footprints*. But other eminent ethnic Korean scholars, such as Pak Ch'ang-ok (Piao Changyu), as well as ethnic Korean senior Party officials, such as Mun Chŏng-il 文正一, Yi Tŏk-su 李德洙 and Cho Nam-gi 趙南起, were also on the editorial team. See Yŏm, *Tto hana ŭi Han'guk Chŏnjaeng*, 21.

[16] It is said that the minister of propaganda in the Yanbian Chinese Communist Party Committee, Ch'oe Ch'ae 崔采, publicly announced this principle in the meeting of the editorial committee in 1988. Ri, *Sumch'age kŏrŏ on kil*, 188-189.

identity intersects with the collective memory of their experiences from Manchukuo to Mao's China. By dissecting the "re-presentation" of history in memories, this research problematizes the prevailing definition of ethnicity as *a priori*, instead showing how ethnic identity is contingent upon interactions between history, ethnopolitics, and memory. This thesis argues that the transformations in ethnopolitics that emerged in the wake of Mao's revolution constructed a contested ethnic identity for ethnic Koreans in northeastern China in which collective memory served as the mediator.

I begin by laying out the theoretical frameworks with regard to three key terms: ethnicity, history, and memory. Rejecting both the prevailing "internal colonialist" model and the "Zhonghua minzu" discourse, this research adopts Anthony D. Smith's culturally subjective definition of ethnicity, as well as Fredrik Barth's "ethnic boundary" theory. I put emphasis on the cultural imagination of the ethnic identity of "ethnic Koreans" in their specific historical contexts. In terms of history, this study challenges the Han-centered "authentic" historical discourse to "make more space for diversity" in the field of modern Chinese history.[17] Moreover, this research deconstructs the image of ethnic minority groups as "peripheralized," since "ethnicity" has continued to play a central role in the narratives of Chinese history. Lastly, this chapter elaborates upon this research's memory-centered approach in studying the history of ethnic Koreans.

Chapter 2 continues with an exploration of the memories of ethnic Koreans regarding the Manchukuo years. Debunking the proleptic assumption of ethnic consciousness, this chapter demonstrates the contingency and fluidity of Koreans' ethnic imagination in colonial Manchuria. While emigrants from the Korean peninsula flooded into Manchuria beginning in the last few

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[17] Brown, "PRC History in Crisis and Clover," 705-710.

decades of the nineteenth century, a sense of anxiety over the Sino-Japanese conflict and growing Chinese nationalism loomed large among the Korean emigrants in Manchuria in the 1920s. When Manchukuo was established, many Koreans were willing to embrace the appealing ideology of *minzu xiehe* (concordia of ethnos) as an alternative to colonialist assimilation. Pointing toward the immorality of Western hegemony and Chinese nationalism, *minzu xiehe* was internalized by the Manchurian Koreans into a value beyond the notion of ethnicity. The material temptation and opportunity of individual achievement offered by Manchukuo further dissolved the conceived boundaries between ethnic groups into fluid, pluralist, and contingent notions of "ethnicity."

Chapter 3 focuses on the CCP's making of "Korean ethnicity" in northeastern China during the Chinese civil war and Manchurian Koreans' responses to those initiatives. Although "Korean ethnicity" could hardly be treated as a completely "modern" notion, this chapter shows how the conceptualization of "ethnic Koreans" (*chaoxianzu*) was deeply intertwined with the memory of the Chinese civil war as "*fanshen*" (turning over). The dislocation, violence, and discrimination experienced by the Manchurian Koreans after the collapse of Manchukuo constructed an "ethnicized" collective memory of the civil war. Moreover, the rise of Koreans to power in local Manchurian society, encouraged by the CCP's war strategy, granted them a unique sense of "ethnicized" *fanshen*. Responding to the CCP's ethnicity-based mobilization during the civil war, the ethnic Koreans put considerable efforts into "re-presenting" ethnic culture through symbols of flags, commemorations, education, and mass media. I argue that the collective memory of the Chinese civil war "*fanshen*" was constructed by ethnic Koreans as the mediating filter through which to conceptualize their ethnic identity.

Chapter 4 proceeds to examine the CCP's construction project of ethnic Koreans as "model minority" in the early socialist era. I focus on the inconsistency between the official historical narrative within the frame of "model minority" and the collective memory of ethnic Koreans with regard to the political campaigns to root out "traitors" and "purify" the Party leadership during the early 1950s. My study discovers how the discourse of "model minority" failed to discipline the ethnic imagination of ethnic Koreans, and even largely traumatized their remembering of socialist China. The "anti-traitor" campaign was supposedly carried out to consolidate the unity between ethnic Koreans and the Party-state against their common enemies of Japanese imperialism or the Chinese Nationalists; it came to be remembered, however, as the Party-state's prosecution of the honorable Korean independence activists. The intra-Party purges of "the politically impure" are also interpreted by ethnic Koreans' as the CCP's marginalization and expulsion of their "heroes," who previously had made indispensable contributions to their "*fanshen*." Hence, in the memories of ethnic Koreans, "model minority" becomes a void category without "models" and without, more significantly, the voices from the bottom. The repression of their voices within the Party-state's monopolization of historical narrative not merely laid the ground for the failure of of ethnic Koreans to embrace the "model minority" imagination, but also rendered their experiences of early socialist China into a collective memory of ethnic persecution and trauma.

1

Ethnicity, History, and Memory

Before going further into the discussions about the history of ethnic Koreans, it is necessary to "engage with the big questions," as Elizabeth J. Perry puts it, underlying this topic, as well as to clarify some of my key approaches.[18] I call into question the common understanding of notions like "ethnicity," "history," and "memory," terms that this thesis argues should not be taken for granted. Indeed, tracing the historical process of conceptualizing these notions is itself part of the central task of this research project. For instance, one might ask: What is the "real" ethnic identity for ethnic Koreans? Why does the history of ethnic Koreans matter? How can memory testify to "historical reality"? While this research paper aims to dissect these questions, my stance is to first locate them in their historical backgrounds or, namely, their epistemological contexts.

Manchuria and Nationalist Historiographies: a historical review

Manchuria, present-day northeastern China, has long been in a problematic position in the historiography of Korea and of China. Throughout the recorded history, this vast land, bounded on the west by the Mongolian Plateau and in the east by the Korean peninsula, from the Stanovoy Range in the north and to the Great Wall in the south, was inhabited by various indigenous peoples, comprised of inhabitants from Puyŏ, Koguryŏ, Parhae (Bohai), and including those identified as Xianbei, Khitan, Jurchen, and Manchu.[19] But as the Chinese

[18] Perry, "The Promise of PRC History," 4.
[19] It should be noted that the use of Korean romanization or Chinese pinyin as the name of these peoples simply follows the mainstream usage in academia and does not imply any association of these histories with the modern nation-states of China or Korea.

Confucian literati long viewed this peripheral region, later named Manchuria, as the lands of the "eastern barbarians" 東夷, not many historical studies were devoted to this "no man's land" until the Qing era.[20] Claiming Manchuria as their homeland, the governing group of the Qing empire, the Manchu rulers, put great effort into conceptualizing this region as wholly distinctive and separate from the rest of China.[21] According to the Qing emperors, only by preserving a Manchu sanctuary could the Manchu people maintain the distinctiveness of their ethnic identity from the majority Han Chinese, and thereby keep themselves in power. The regionality of Manchuria, established by Qing-era histories such as the *Research on Manchu Origins* (Manzhou yuanliu kao), laid the foundation for the emergence of "Manchurian history" in early 20th-century China, Korea, and Japan.[22]

Beginning with the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese empire rose to become the dominant colonial power in Manchuria. With control of the southern tip of the Liaodong Peninsula (Kwantung Leased Territory) and the entire southern half of the Manchurian railway, Japan built massive institutions, such as the South Manchurian Railway and the Kwantung Army, to protect Manchuria under its sphere of influence against the Chinese nationalist movement, threat from the Soviet Union, and other capitalist powers such as the U.S. and British empire.[23] In this context, rewriting the history of Manchuria aligned with Japan's imperialist initiatives. Eminent Japanese sinologists, including Shiratori Kurakichi, Naitō Konan, and Inaba Iwakichi, placed the region of *man-sen* (Manchuria-Korea) or *man-hō* (Manchuria-Mongolia) at

[20] Although the Ming dynasty "re-established" the Central Plain (*zhongyuan*, 中原) empire's control over Manchuria after hundreds of years of indigenous rule, the Ming Chinese literati still demarcated the region north of the Shanhai Pass, which they called Liaodong 遼東, from the heartland as a remote frontier waiting for Confucian salvation in their imagination. Ma, "Encompassing Boundaries of the Ming and Early Qing Liaodong."
[21] Elliott, "The Limits of Tartary," 604-619.
[22] Crossley, "*Manzhou yuanliu kao* and the Formalization of the Manchu Heritage," 779-783.
[23] Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 22-40.

the center of the history of East Asia, or *Tōyō* (the East, 東洋) as they named it.[24] The school of *man-sen* history combined Manchuria and Korea as a historically unified region, which Inaba claimed as Manchuria-Korean indivisibility 満鮮不可分, crucial to Japan in protecting it against invasions from the continent.[25] The *man-sen* history provided epistemological materials for the Japanese propaganda in Manchukuo and colonial Korea during the "Great East Asian War," but also further entangled the historical connections between Manchuria and Korea.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Manchuria as a "Korean national space" started to draw attention from historians in colonial Korea. Conventional historiography since the Chosŏn dynasty portraited the territorial scope of national history within the peninsula, criticized by later scholars as the "peninsular view" (*pando sagwan*), in which Manchuria served as Other. Sin Ch'aeho was among the first to incorporate Manchuria into his framework of *minjok* (national) history, against the court-centered "state history." Different from the Japanese emphasis on the unity of Manchuria-Korea, Sin rediscovered Manchuria as an indispensable part of Korea's "national space," tracing the historical legitimacy of the Korean *minjok* on the land of Manchuria from Tangun to Koguryŏ.[26] This "northern view" of Korean history formed the groundwork for the official nationalist historiographies in both the two Koreas, as well as for an irredentist imagination of Manchuria in the South Korean public.[27] Perceiving Manchuria as a lost territory of Korea, as Sin articulated, Korean emigration into the region turned out to be the nationalist aspiration to "return" to their birthplace, rather than a facet of Japanese imperialist expansion.

[24] Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, 239-253.
[25] Inoue, *Teikoku Nihon to "Man-Sen shi,"* chaps 3 and 4.
[26] Schmid, "Rediscovering Manchuria," 26-37.
[27] Schmid, ibid., 37-44. For other Korean historians' Manchuria-centered view, see Allen, "Northeast Asia Centered Around Korea: Ch'oe Nam-son's View of History."

Following the fall of the Qing empire, Chinese historians also found it imperative to integrate Manchuria into the history of the "Chinese nation." The Qing court's restriction of settlement (*fengjin*, 封禁) proved futile during the last decades of its rule, when millions of Han Chinese peasants flooded from North China into Manchuria. From the provincialization of Manchuria in 1907, the "Manchu sanctuary" was given the same status as other provinces in China Proper, with Han Chinese emerging as the dominant population group. But the Japanese occupation of Manchuria after the Manchurian Incident in 1931 deeply shifted the fledging Chinese nationalism towards a unifying and powerful theme of resisting against the Japanese.[28] The Manchurian crisis spurred the Chinese intellectuals to consolidate the position of Manchuria within the history of China, in opposition to Japan's attempt to separate it from China.[29] Thereafter, with the advent of the second Sino-Japanese war, Manchuria as "Chinese territory" was established as an unchallengeable principle in Chinese scholarly works and any reference to the toponym *Manzhou* (Sino-Japanese word for Manchuria) was to be replaced with the phrases, "Eastern three provinces" 東三省 and "the Northeast" 東北, or otherwise put in quotation marks.

The nationalist historiographies of Manchuria as either lost "Korean space" or unalterable "Chinese territory" have deeply shaped the conventional perspective with regard to Koreans in Manchuria. As the review of Manchurian historiographies in this section suggests, the history of Korean communities in Manchuria could never be monopolized by the historiography of any single nation-state. The historical conditions of early twentieth-century Manchuria, as a culturally diverse and trans-regionally interactive area, created the foundation for ethnic

[28] Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth*.

[29] Representative Chinese historical studies on Manchuria during this period include Fu Sinian's *Dongbei shigang* (Outline of Northeast History) and Jin Yufu's *Dongbei tongshi* (Comprehensive History of the Northeast), which determined the framework through which to narrate Manchurian history in the present-day PRC and ROC.

imagination. The notion of ethnicity in the history of Manchuria, as well as the historiography of Manchuria itself, thus calls for reexamination from a de-ethnonationalized perspective.

Ethnicity

Scholars remind us that "ethnicity seems to be a new term." It did not appear in the *Oxford English Dictionary* until 1953.[30] It is also by no means a rigorously defined term. It can refer to a range of meanings from "the essence of an ethnic group," "the quality of belonging to an ethnic group," to "what it is you have if you are an ethnic group."[31] Fundamentally, ethnic group is a particular form of social grouping and was originally used to refer to "sub-groups" under the modern nation-state. In this sense, anglophone scholars commonly translate the Chinese concept of *minzu* and the Soviet concept of *natsia* with the term, "ethnic group." But since Marxist orthodoxy denies the socialist state to be a "nation-state" and Lenin held national self-determination as a powerful mobilization force against Russian autocracy during the revolution, the subsequent regimes of the Soviet Union and socialist China recognized these sub-groups as "national groups."[32] Since early theorists, including Marx and Lenin, lacked coherent views of the nationality question, the emphasis on national unity and centralized control over ethnic minority groups after the Communist Party came to power could be seen as a betrayal of its promises.

As a result, some scholars in the west apply the framework of "internal colonialism" to understand the relationship between ethnic minority groups and the Party-state in the Soviet

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[30] Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 4.
[31] Ibid. Therefore, scholars suggest standardizing the noun form of "ethnic" with the Greek term "ethnos" or French term "ethnie." See Bromley, "The Term Ethnos and its Definition"; Hutchinson and Smith, ibid, 4-7. In this thesis, I consider all these three facets of "ethnicity"—as essentialist, as subjective, and as ethnopolitical—in historical contexts.
[32] Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy*.

Union and China.[33] The "internal colonialist" model was first applied to analyze ethnonationalism by sociologist Michael Hechter in his pioneering works on the formation of the British Empire. Scholars found that analogous to western imperialism, the centralized states of the Soviet Union and socialist China carried out equivalent "internal colonialist" projects to homogenize its rule over different ethnic groups, as "red empires." Based on this theory, some scholars analyze the economic and socio-cultural marginalization of particular groups in the history of modern China.[34] Dru C. Gladney, vehemently opposing the Maoist definition of early twentieth-century China as "semi-colonial," argues that the history of "internal colonialist" domination renders ethnic minority groups in China into the "subaltern."[35] The "internal colonialist" model is also embraced in the western scholarship of Chinese frontiers to criticize the long history, as well as the contemporary reality, of Chinese (Han) elites' civilizing project over indigenous peoples.[36] Scholars have contended that the colonialist project at the local level created "a sense of ethnicity that both opposed Chinese power and appropriated it."[37] In fact, however, this "internal colonialist" discourse turns out to be hardly novel; after the collapse of the Qing empire, Japanese scholars attacked the Han-centered Republic of China with a similar discourse to legitimate Japan's support of "independence" for Manchuria and Inner Mongolia.[38] More ironically, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) adopted the same discourse of "internal

[33] For Sovietologists' discussions about internal colonialism in the Soviet Union, see Gouldner, "Stalinism: A Study of Internal Colonialism"; Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*; Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations*; Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*.
[34] Some of these groups may not be fully recognized by the world outside of China as "ethnic groups": for instance, Subei people and Cantonese, who are normally regarded under the massive, also mythical, category of Han Chinese. See Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity*; Carrico, "Recentering China: The Cantonese in and beyond the Han."
[35] Gladney, *Dislocating China*. Also see Gladney, "Whither the Uighur"; "Internal Colonialism and the Uyghur Nationality."
[36] See Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*; Weinstein, *Empire and Identity in Guizhou*.
[37] Schluessel, *Land of Strangers*, 3.
[38] This "dividing China theory" (*shina bunkatsu ron*, 支那分割論) comes from the argument of the Qing court's relationship with Manchuria, Mongolia, and Tibet as "suzerainty," which should not be inherited by the Republic of China as "sovereignty." Japanese scholars supporting this view include Nakajima Atsushi, Sakamaki Teiichirō, and Naitō Konan. See Ge, *Zhai zi Zhongguo*, 231-53; Naitō, *Shinan ron*.

colonialization" to mobilize ethnic minority groups in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, and northwestern China against the Nationalist government during the civil war.[39]

Predictably, the "internal colonialist" model is resisted by "orthodox" ethnologists and historians in China, who contend that ethnic minority groups have long been assimilated into the "*Zhonghua minzu*" (Chinese people). Frank Dikötter has traced the continuity in meanings of the affix *zu* from referring only to lineage line or family to forming new notions such as *zhongzu* (race) and *minzu* during late nineteenth-century China.[40] Rebecca Karl shows in her study that the imperialist global context fostered the idea of "broad Chinese nationalism"—to merge all the *minzu* within the Qing territory into one single nation-state of *Zhonghua minzu*—in the writings of late imperial elites, such as Liang Qichao.[41] This view of *Zhonghua minzu* as a "melting pot" was later adopted by Sun Yat-sen in his "Three Principles of the People" and became the ideology of the Kuomintang (KMT) government after Sun's death.[42] The CCP officially adopted Joseph Stalin's views on ethnicity, which contended that *minzu* (*natsia*), defined by four criteria, only takes shape during the progressive stage of capitalism. However, this view encountered resistance as early as 1950 from historian Fan Wenlan, who contended that the *Zhonghua minzu* had satisfied Stalin's criteria of nationhood since the Qin-Han era and thus traced the ethnic origin of China to long before the capitalist age.[43] This debate continued in the 1980s, when Fei

[39] See Liu, *Frontier Passages*; Jacobs and Harrell, *Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese States*; Wang and Fletcher, *The East Turkestan Independence Movement, 1930s to 1940s*.
[40] Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, 61-125.
[41] Karl, *Staging the World*, 53-195. Also see Hayton, *The Invention of China*, 128-153.
[42] Historians have widely accepted the conventional image that the KMT government clung on the ethnic view of "*Zhonghua minzu* as one nation" in an unchallengeable way. Indeed, we could find various evidence from the KMT's documents or Chiang Kai-shek's writings, such as *The Destiny of China*, supporting this "Great Han Chauvinism." However, recent studies show the KMT's ambivalence toward ethnic minority policies. Chiang even once expresses his support for establishing independent nation-states in border regions to form China into a federal government. Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier*, 47.
[43] Zhang, "Fan Wenlan yu 'Han minzu xingcheng wenti zhenglun'." Fan Wenlan is among the most eminent figures of "Marxist historiography in China" and among the most influential historians in the PRC.

Xiaotong proposed his theory of *Zhonghua minzu* as “unity and plurality” (*duoyuan yiti*) and the thousand-year process of “ethnic melding” (*minzu ronghe*).[44] In present-day China, the *Zhonghua minzu* theory, about how ethnic minority groups joined the “Chinese family,” has evolved into the dominant discourse of ethnicity-related history.[45]

The most serious challenge imposed on both the “internal colonialist” model and “Zhonghua minzu” discourse comes from recent developments in cultural anthropological studies in the west. Scholars subscribing to either of these conceptualizations share a tendency to assume that all ethnic groups in China developed a sense of identity and solidarity based on certain objective criteria (e.g., common language or culture) since early times, at least before they came under the rule of the CCP, and they merely disagree regarding the attitude of ethnic minorities toward the new regime. Nevertheless, ethnicity as a cultural concept was largely re-developed by cultural anthropologists after World War II. They have argued that the traditional objective identification of “ethnic unit” based on biological characteristics, languages, or cultural traits should be problematized as an essentialist bias. To what extent an attribute can be recognized as “common” or “distinctive” in identifying ethnicity depends on the observers’ own interpretation as to “common” and “distinctive.”[46] In other words, the objectivity claimed by the essentialists is by no means attainable since any knowledge with regard to *other* cultures is always circumscribed by the observer’s *own* culture, a dilemma that G. E. Marcus and M. M. J. Fischer call “the crisis of representation.”

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[44] Leibold, “Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China.”

[45] Representative works of this theory include Fei, *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju*; Ge, *Zhai zi zhongguo*; Wong, *Qing diguo xingzhi de zai shangque*.

[46] A very interesting instance related to this idea is offered by Wang Ming-ke, who notices that applying objective criteria, such as language, costume, or religion, is insufficient to identify the Qiang as an independent ethnic group from either Han or Tibetan in southwestern China. See Wang, *Qiang zai Han Zang zhijian*.

"The crisis of representation" reminds the proponents of either the "internal colonialist" model or "Zhonghua minzu" theory of the problem of assuming "a world of separate peoples," which "can legitimately be isolated for description as a land to itself."[47] It urges scholars to redirect their focus from objective classification to subjective imagination, as well as from the center to its boundary. In his book, Wang Ming-ke draws a vivid analogy between the definition of ethnicity and that of a circle. In Euclidean geometry, a circle is defined by all the points on the edge, which are at given distance to the center. In other words, a circle is defined by its periphery and, as Wang argues, so is ethnicity.[48] Wang is certainly not the only one suggesting the "boundary theory," which was first proposed by anthropologist Fredrik Barth. As Barth underscores, it is the ethnic boundary, social but not necessarily geographical, that "defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses."[49] My research, largely inspired by Wang and Barth's views, considers ethnic Koreans in northeastern China as a unique prism through which we can examine the ethnic boundary between two emerging nationalist entities, China and Korea, in the twentieth century in a historically grounded way.[50] I hope that my study of ethnic Koreans can bring diversity and new thinking into the nationalist-centered historiographies of both modern China and Korea.

If the primordialist understanding of ethnicity should be revised through the "ethnic boundary" theory, what definitive elements determine the subjective imagination of the "ethnic boundary"? Anthony D. Smith famously outlines six features of the imagination of "ethnicity": a

[47] Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 11.
[48] Wang, *Huaxia bianyuan*, 11.
[49] Barth, ibid., 15.
[50] The reason why the case of ethnic Koreans is unique is that there are hardly any other examples among ethnic minority groups in China comparable to that of ethnic Koreans. Most of the ethnic minority groups, such as Tibetans, Uighurs, Hui Muslims, and etc., do not have "their" nation-states outside of China. For those who gained nation-states from the collapse of the Soviet Union, such as the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Tajiks, their history with "their" nation-states seems insufficiently long and significant. Perhaps the only comparable example is that of the Mongols in China.

common proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland, and a sense of solidarity.[51] Although I do not intend to rigorously follow Smith's definition, Smith's approach of emphasizing the role of history-memory in imagination of ethnicity aligns with the purpose of this research. In other words, the subjective identification of "ethnic boundary" should be historized as a process related to the collective conceptualization of history and memory. This subjective approach not only demonstrates the main principle of this research—to listen to the voices of the ethnic Koreans themselves—but also historicizes ethnicity as a product of both history and memory.

History

As Eric J. Hobsbawm notes, "nations without pasts are contradictions in terms. What makes a nation *is* the past."[52] Hobsbawm's comment on the relationship of the nation with history is no less pertinent for that of ethnicity. In fact, the recent discussions on ethnicity are largely derived from studies of nation and nationalism. Since the meanings of ethnicity and nation are historically intertwined in the East Asian context, under the common vocabulary of *minzu*/*minjok*/*minzoku*, it may be worthwhile to review some of the prevailing theories with regard to the origins of the nation. Modernist thinkers have pointed out that nations and nationalism are inevitable products of modernity. Ernest Gellner famously asked, "do nations have navels?" by which he refers to the ethnic past of nations, and he argues that what is crucial is that modernity generates the need for a "navel."[53] Eric Hobsbawm looked into the renaissance of traditions in late nineteenth-century Western Europe and analyzed how elites manipulated

[51] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 21-41.
[52] Hobsbawm, "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe," 255.
[53] Gellner, "Ernest Gellner's reply."

cultural symbols into "invented traditions."[54] For Benedict Anderson, literacy and print capitalism, as products of modernity, determine how nations are conceptualized into "imagined communities."

Regarding nations as purely the creation of "modernity" is, however, inadequate to understand the complex relationship between nation/ethnicity and history. To provide supplements to the modernist perspective, a group of scholars, represented by Anthony D. Smith and John Hutchinson, came up with the "ethno-symbolist theory." They refer to German historian Friedrich Meinecke's idea that differentiates two definitions of nation, the *Kulturnation* and *Staatsnation*, the former being the "passive cultural community," and the latter the "active, self-determining political nation."[55] Matching Meinecke's idea of *Kulturnation* with the notion of ethnicity, Anthony D. Smith develops his theory of the "ethnic origin" of nations, which emphasizes the continuity of the "ethnic core," consisting of history, myth, and memory, in forming the notion of the "nation." In Smith's eyes, the "ethnic history" imagined by the group is not simply fabricated or forgettable, as Hobsbawm and Anderson believed, respectively, but "may provide requisite cultural 'materials' and create nodes around which modern nations can form, given conducive circumstances."[56]

Both the ethno-symbolists and the modernists cannot deny the power of history in constructing the imagination of "nations." History turns out to be a handmaiden for the epistemological project of the modern nation-state, which mobilizes its power in generating the authenticity of the history it certifies. The authentic history of the nation-state, on one hand, serves to highlight its ethnic origin and, on the other, it works to suppress anomalies and

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[54] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*.
[55] Smith, *National Identity*, 8.
[56] Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism*, 38.

inconsistencies. For example, the East Asian "nations," China, Korea, and Japan, are commonly treated as "among the extremely rare examples of historic states composed of a population that is ethnically almost or entirely homogeneous."[57] Gi-wook Shin, in his monograph on Korean nationalism, also expresses his agreement with the idea that "Korea has had a fairly homogeneous ethnic, protonation, or historical nation, if not the nation in the modern sense, for centuries."[58] However, the uniform and coherent concept of "Korean-ness" with a long history has already been deconstructed by recent historical works that have uncovered a diversity of ethnic origins, cultures, languages, and identities in the northern border regions of Chosŏn Korea.[59] That diverse northern identity faded away as the "authentic history" was rewritten during the nation-building process of Korea over the twentieth century.

The position of ethnicity was also sidelined in the "authentic" historical narrative of China. As Stevan Harrell suggests, the ethnic minority groups in China over the last few centuries, as "peripheral peoples," are "far away from the centers of institutional and economic power," where the Chinese state, as well as Western imperialism, exerted dominant power to "civilize" the periphery.[60] Harrell argues that the civilizing project is based on the unequal relationship between the powerful center and the peripheral peoples; ethnic consciousness appears as the response of the periphery to the center's modernizing initiatives. Harrell's "center-periphery" theory defines ethnicity on the basis of marginalization and inequality, but it meanwhile creates a strong-weak dichotomy within the limits of "authentic history," which tends to downplay the significance of the "weak" periphery in Chinese history. As Owen Lattimore

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57 Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, 66. In a very recent debate on Azar Gat's *Nations*, Gat expressed a similar statement to Hobsbawm regarding China's "unique continuous cultural and political existence over millennia." Hutchinson, Wickham, Strath, and Gat, "Debate on Azar Gat's *Nations*."
58 Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 18.
59 See Kim, *The Northern Region of Korea*; Bohnet, *Turning toward Edification*.
60 Harrell, *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, 3.

and Liu Xiaoyuan remark in their studies, China has long been a "frontier country" and the "Frontier Style" plays a critical role in its millennia of imperial rule.[61] Even for the center, Harrell's monolithic assertion of a "strong" Han-dominant civilizing discourse obscures the nonreflexivity of Han as an ethnic entity. Recently, scholars have brought forward a new field of "Critical Han Studies" to deconstruct the category of Han, analogous to "whiteness," as the power to shape and differentiate ethnic perceptions, rather than as a self-evident identity for the "Chinese."[62]

Furthermore, in criticizing the Harrellian ethnic view, Mark C. Elliott points out that "definitions of ethnicity that emphasize subordination in a modern context leave out rather a lot."[63] Looking particularly into the case of the Manchu-led Qing empire, Elliott rebuts Harrell's idea of acculturation, arguing instead that the ethnic peoples under Manchu rule were to "remain 'raw,' or at least 'rare.'"[64] Elliott goes on to question if ethnicity is the result of peripheral assimilation, what he sees as parallel to the "melting pot" myth, how should ethnic identity among the Manchus, the at the center of cultural transformation during the Qing dynasty, be explained? Although Elliott modestly admits that the "center-periphery" model might work well enough for the twentieth century, his insightful comments resonate with my understanding about the ethnic Koreans in twentieth-century northeastern China. As this research will reveal, the ethnic identity of "ethnic Koreans" can hardly be fitted into the language of hegemonic acculturation but is instead a historically contingent *process*. In this sense, my approach to

[61] Liu, *Bianjiang zhongguo*, 281-289. Lattimore defines the "Frontier Style" in Chinese history as "either a dynasty is founded beyond the Frontier or on the Frontier, and moved inward to establish its control over China, or it was founded within China and moved outward to establish control over the Frontier or sometimes beyond the Frontier." Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, 409.
[62] Mullaney, Leibold, Gros, and Bussche, *Critical Han Studies*.
[63] Elliott, "Ethnicity in Qing Eight Banners," 34.
[64] Ibid., 33.

ethnicity aligns with Elliott's—to move "from the column of 'Immutable Givens' to the column of 'Contingent Constructions.'"[65]

While this research aims to rescue the narratives of ethnicity from "authentic history," we should meanwhile be cautious about being trapped into the "linear history" of nation-states, as Prasenjit Duara reminds us. Duara posed a dilemma for all historians—it is "difficult to count histories that do not belong to a contemporary nation."[66] The linear, teleological, progressive history since Hegel has framed nations as the subject of history to realize the evolution of Spirit, that is, modernity. But Duara observes nations to be entities that registers difference, since even for the sub-groups as rivals of the nation-states, such as Tibet or the Punjab, they "are never able to eliminate alternative constructions of the nation among both old and new communities."[67] Duara, therefore, is eager to discover a "polyphony of voices," under "the harmonized, monologic voice of the Nation," which are "contradictory and ambiguous, opposing, affirming, and negotiating their views of the nation."[68] Although I take issue with Duara's tendency to treat the narrative of the nation as always repressive, I still find it useful to employ Duara's notion of "bifurcated history" in studying the history of ethnic Koreans. In echo of Duara's call, this research is attentive to the "polyphony of voices" outside of the "authentic history," with consideration, moreover, of how the alternative narratives have been dispersed and reshaped. The latter consideration leads this research into the realm of memory.

Memory

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[65] Ibid., 34.
[66] Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 3.
[67] Duara, ibid., 9.
[68] Ibid., 10.

In her study on rural women in Mao-era China, Gail Hershatter coins the phrase, "the gender of memory." This term does not suggest gender as an immutable category, as Hershatter explains, but stresses that "memory is a social process, shaped by the social distinction of gender in ways impossible to ignore."[69] By immersing herself in the stories of village women, Hershatter points out that the linear history of 1950s China from "oppression" to "liberation," what she calls "campaign time," provided by the Party-state is insufficient, as rural women's responses to the socialist revolution remain unknown. Hershatter's critics substantially inspired this research project. Existing historical studies on China's ethnic frontiers under socialist rule have granted noticeable privilege to the perspectives of the Party-state or the elites in the center. Little has been written about how ordinary people of ethnic minority groups experienced and remembered the socialist era. Therefore, my own research boldly coins the notion, "the ethnicity of memory," in response to Hershatter's call for rescuing "good-enough" stories, in this instance, of ethnic Koreans from the narrative of "campaign-time."

In addition to underscoring my focus on the narratives of members of a particular contingent ethnic group, my invocation of "the ethnicity of memory" has, in fact, another level of significance. This term points to the deep-rooted interrelation between collective memory and ethnic identity. Collective memory, a notion first systematically used by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, represents his idea that every memory belongs to a specific social group. "The social frameworks of memory," as Halbwachs proposes, emphasize that memory, as a reconstruction of the past, perforce requires support from collective sources.[70] Decades after Halbwachs, historian Pierre Nora integrated discussion of memory and identity into a remarkable trend in historical studies. In the multivolume project led by him, Nora examines how symbolic

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[69] Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory*, 24.
[70] Halbwachs and Coser, *On Collective Memory*, 37-51.

elements—such as monuments, shrines, textbooks, museums, etc.—which he terms *les lieux de mémoire* (the realms of memory), have perpetually constructed and interpreted the "national memory" of Republican France. Nora's project, on one hand, deconstructs the myth of "national history," revealing that the redefinition of "French identity" is based on the revitalization of the collective memory that was constructed for the "nation." On the other hand, however, it unexpectedly promoted the state's attention to "national commemorations" and the public's passion for a hollow notion of "*les lieux de mémoire*," a phenomenon Nora condemns as "the tyranny of memory."[71]

Inspired by Nora's work, the remaining chapters of my study will demonstrate that ethnicity is an intrinsically embedded narrative line in the collective memory of ethnic Koreans, as well as other groups, explicitly or implicitly. This intertwined relationship between memory and ethnicity is better explained in the discussions by Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann about *kulturelles Gedächtnis* (cultural memory).[72] As Jan Assmann points out, it is the shared memories upon which one culture is based that connect its individual subjects with their social world. This connectivity, as the essence of memory, enables individuals to frame their identity through shared cultural elements. Although Assmann insists upon differentiating *kulturelles Gedächtnis* from *kommunikatives Gedächtnis* (communicative memory), as his main revision to Halbwachs' notion of "collective memory," his perceptive observation as to how memory and identity become interrelated undergirds the theoretical framework of this research. Borrowing from Assmann's idea of the connectivity of memory, I will show that memories of ethnic

[71] Nora and Kritzman, *Realms of Memory*, 3:609-637.
[72] Scholars have felt hesitant to translate the German term, *kulturelles Gedächtnis*, coined by the Assmanns, directly into "cultural memory," because of the semantic differences of the two words "*kulturelles*" and "*Gedächtnis*" with their English equivalences. For further explanations, see Erll, Nünning, and Young, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 87-88.

Koreans served as the mediator connecting individuals and the socialist new world, becoming means though which ethnic consciousness was reified (Chapters 3 and 4).

A fundamental challenge that this research may encounter is: to what extent can memories be counted as history? Eminent twentieth-century thinkers have had in-depth debates about this question. Halbwachs, particularly, points out the chasm between history and collective memory. According to him, collective memory is confined to the space-time boundaries of the group, but history connects changes from one period to another; while history pursues unity for the human species, collective memory is defined by multiplicity.[73] Michael de Certeau defines psychoanalysis and history as two mechanisms of memory; while history, in the tradition of objectivity, separates the past as the "other" from the present, psychoanalysis, via memory, strives to recall the repressed past within the present.[74] Pierre Nora, comparing the differences between history and memory, writes:

> Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name… History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer…Memory… nourishes recollection…responsive to each avenue of conveyance or phenomenal screen, to every censorship or projection. History… calls for analysis and criticism… memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority… Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative. (Nora, 1989)

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[73] Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 78-87.
[74] Certeau, "Psychoanalysis and its History," 35-50. Also see Certeau, *The Writing of History*.

While many scholars, including Nora, define history as the study of "what is no longer," Nora further notices the dilemma of "contemporary history," which he phrases as "the acceleration of history." Nora maintains that "what we call memory today is therefore not memory but already history," as the events that happened in the twentieth century were turning into the "past" at an unprecedent speed.[75] The time span covered in "contemporary history," merely a few decades away from the present, seems to be the past that can be retrieved thorough the continuity of memory. In this collapsed time-space of history-memory, "national memory" replaced "national history," in parallel with identity and memory becoming "circular, almost synonymous."[76] The acceleration of memory being engulfed by history, as Nora puts it, creates a moral imperative for the society in "the present" to remember, preserve, and "re-appropriate" its past. The duty of remembering turns historical writing into a symbol of commemoration, by mean of which historians become themselves, *les lieux de mémoire*.

This research, although cognizant of the discontinuity from memory to history, considers *régime d'historicité* (regimes of historicity) as a continuity.[77] In other words, under the context of "contemporary history," historians' attempts to disengage history from memory are not necessarily unachievable but ineluctable from the regimes of historicity in which they are situated. This "historicity" continuously shapes historians' re-presentation of the "true past." As Paul Ricoeur has described it, "we make history, we make histories, because we are historical."[78] Despite us all being situated in the flow of historicity, memory renders what kinds of "regimes of

[75] Nora, "Between Memory and History," 13-18.
[76] Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 635.
[77] *Régime d'historicité* is a notion proposed by François Hartog, a French historian. It refers to one society's ways of connecting the past and the present—that is, how the past is re-presented in the present. See Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*.
[78] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 284.

historicity" with which we are working visible to us. This is exactly why this research finds a memory-centered approach valuable: it is opening up a *histoire au second degré* (history of second degree) for socialist China, echoing with Duara's "bifurcated history" and Hershatter's "good-enough story," but on the basis of the realm of memory.

2

New Manchuria, New World

> There is the new Manchuria in the world.
>
> The new Manchuria is a new world.
>
> Uprightness and freedom from suffering make our country,
>
> With only camaraderie but no hatred.
>
> —"The National Anthem of Manchukuo" (1933-1942)

In the summer of 2005, researchers from Kyungsung University in South Korea visited several ethnic Korean "seniors," who had lived through the Manchukuo period, to collect oral histories about the experiences of ethnic Koreans under Manchukuo's rule. One of the foremost motivations behind this project, as the editor Kang Tae-min articulates, was to record testimonies related to the Korean "pro-Japanese collaborators" in Manchuria.[79] Kang's purpose cannot be extricated from the broader context of the encompassing movement in the name of "discovering the truth of pro-Japanese anti-national behaviors" in early 2000s South Korea. The committee of "investigating pro-Japanese collaborators," consisting of outstanding historians, was organized by the South Korean government. In the final report the committee submitted, serving Manchukuo was condemned as "pro-Japanese anti-national behavior," implying Manchukuo as a repressive regime against the Korean "ethnicity" (*minjok/minzu*) in Manchuria. Expecting the ethnic Korean interviewees in China to "speak their bitterness" of sufferings under Manchukuo's rule, the researchers eventually obtained astonishing "testimonies" showing how the ethnic

[79] Kang, *Kiŏk sok ŭi Manjuguk*, 1: iii-v.

Koreans' memories of Manchukuo question the conventional historical interpretation of the oppression-resistance dichotomy and, more importantly, the conceptualization of "ethnicity" under Manchukuo from a bottom-up perspective.

The land of Manchuria was inhabited by and contested between various indigenous peoples, as well as the Chinese state to the south, over centuries in imperial China. After the Qing empire collapsed in 1911, Manchuria came under the Republic of China but was in reality ruled by a group of local military elites, the Fengtian clique, headed by Zhang Zuolin. Following the assassination of Zhang Zuolin in 1928, his son and successor, Zhang Xueliang, exhibited more hostility to Japan's growing influence in Manchuria. Consequently, the Japanese Kwantung Army carried out the Manchurian Incident in 1931 and forcibly expelled Zhang's rule. The high-ranking officers in the Kwantung Army saw the Manchurian crisis as an extraordinary opportunity for Japan to ultimately secure its interests and power in Manchuria, the "lifeline" of the Japanese empire, against the threats from Chinese nationalism and Western Imperialism. But they had a clear sense that the metropole would not directly accept Manchuria as a new colony, after Korea and Taiwan, because of the immediate international pressure imposed on the Japanese government by the League of Nations. Therefore, the Kwantung Army officers concocted the Manchurian independence movement and directed the establishment of the puppet state, Manchukuo, in March 1932.

A few weeks before the founding of Manchukuo, Puyi, the last emperor of the Qing dynasty, had a special guest in his residence in Lushun. Itagaki Seishirō, one of the main conspirators behind the Manchurian Incident, visited Puyi from the Kwantung Army to persuade him to be the chief of state of a new nation, Manchukuo. Puyi's meeting with Itagaki, however, reveals another facet of the Manchukuo state-building project. As Puyi recalls in his memoir, Itagaki talked about establishing a new country in Manchuria, "This new country names Manchukuo… mainly consist[ing] of five ethnic groups (*minzu*), Manchu, Han, Mongol, Japanese, and Korean…"[80] When Puyi, fearing he was being deceived, furiously asked if this country was the Great Qing empire of which he dreamed, Itagaki explained that this was not the restoration of the Qing empire but a *new* nation. One might be curious why Itagaki emphasized to Puyi the novelty of Manchukuo, its distinctiveness from the Qing empire, especially in relation to ethnic categories, if the new Manchukuo was, after all, purely a Japanese-run puppet state. In the Qing era, ethnic categorization was championed by the Manchu court to maintain their cultural group identity as rulers, or, as Mark C. Elliott calls it, their "ethnic sovereignty."[81] In contrast, the "founding spirit" of Manchukuo as *minzu xiehe* (concordia of ethnos) marks a fundamental distinction with the previous monarchical conceptualization. Namely, under Manchukuo's ethnic principle, all peoples from different ethnic groups were to be granted equal rights and self-respect, similar to "the mode of the Soviet Union of nationalities or today's multicultural nations."[82]

Attention to Manchukuo's distinctive ethnic conceptualization is oftentimes overwhelmed in the immense debates about Manchukuo from the perspective of the Japanese colonial empire. Realizing the novelty behind the founding of Manchukuo, Yamamuro Shin'ichi famously employs the metaphor of "Chimera" for Manchukuo's state-building, which he argues was a failed "deformity" consisting of the Kwantung Army as the head, and the emperor system and modern China as the body and tail.[83] Examining the state-society interactions in building Manchukuo, Louise Young defines Manchukuo as a "multidimensional, mass-mobilizing, and

[80] Puyi, *Wo de qianbansheng*, 271-273.
[81] Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 4.
[82] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 73.
[83] Yamamuro and Fogel, *Manchuria under Japanese dominion*, 1-8.

all-encompassing" project of "total empire."[84] Aligning with Yamamuro and Young's frame of colonial empire, several chapters in the volume, *Crossed Histories*, speak to the ethnic notion under the ideology of Pan-Asianism in Manchukuo but they conclude that such equalitarian ethnic notion ended in failure because of the reality of "Japanese colonialists as the leading ethnicity."[85] Sharing similar views, Mariko Asano Tamanoi's *Memory Maps* traces how the memories, from both the Japanese and Chinese, of Manchukuo have been reshaped after its fall with relations to the colonialist power. While Tamanoi explains the nostalgia for Manchuria in postwar Japan as "voices to recall the Japanese state power," her study concerns less about how the ethnic imagination of the colonized, such as Manchurian Koreans, is substantially involved with such power.[86]

Prasenjit Duara's *Sovereignty and Authenticity* offers insightful discussions about the founding ideologies of Manchukuo, which Duara regards as "not developed as a colony but as a nation-state."[87] Duara points out that the ideology of *minzu xiehe*, on which Manchukuo's sovereignty claims are based, does not only serve as colonialist propaganda, but emerges from the global discourse of the modern. While Duara does not address how the colonized responded to Manchukuo's ethnic ideals, his perspective beyond the oppression-resistance dichotomy resonates with the findings of my study. Accordingly, this chapter explores Manchukuo as "the new world" in terms of the novel ideology of *minzu xiehe*, in the memories of ethnic Koreans. I show how the "ethnicity" under Manchukuo remembered by Manchurian Koreans as fluid, contingent, and pluralist challenges the conventional interpretation of "ethnicity" being repressed or eliminated under Manchukuo rule.

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[84] Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 12.
[85] Tamanoi, edit., *Crossed Histories*, 1-20
[86] Tamanoi, *Memory Maps*, 161.
[87] Duara, ibid., 1.

Manchuria in Turbulence, 1911-1931

The ideal of *minzu xiehe* not only marked a deviation from the hierarchical Qing past, but also a way of salvation from the ethnic conflict present in Manchuria. Starting in the last few decades of Qing rule, Manchuria witnessed a flood of multiethnic settlements from China Proper, the Korean peninsula, Japan, and the Russian Far East. During the 1911 Revolution, under the anti-Qing slogan of "expelling the Tartars and restoring China," the revolutionaries carried out massive anti-Manchu violence and merciless killings of banner peoples.[88] The anti-Manchu violence was not limited to southern China, where the 1911 Revolution mainly took place; in Jinzhou 錦州, a town in southern Manchuria, all members of a Manchu family were slaughtered, including the women and children.[89] As a response to the anti-Manchu discrimination and the Republican government's indifference toward the livelihood problems of the banner people, some restorationists, such as the Royal Clan Party 宗社黨, mobilized for a Manchurian independence movement with Japanese support. Meanwhile influenced by the independence of Mongolia in 1912 and the post-WWI global current of national self-determination, there appeared growing discontent among the Mongols in China about their lack of autonomy and excessive Han settlements under warlord rule. In western Manchuria, Mérsé 郭道甫, a founder of the Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, staged an armed rebellion

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[88] Zarrow, "Historical Trauma."

[89] Shao, *Remote Homeland, Recovered Borderland*, 71. The Banner people in Manchuria, including those of Manchu, Han, and Mongolian origins, experienced much less violence and discrimination compared with their counterparts in China Proper. See Shao, ibid., 69-94. For experiences of banner peoples in early twentieth-century northeastern China, see Ding, *Shiliu ming Qiren funü koushu,* chaps 8-11 and 16.

in Kölün Buyir (Hulun bei'er) in 1928 and another legendary figure, Gada Meiren revolted against the northeastern warlord government in 1929.[90]

The Koreans in Manchuria faced more severe animosity from the local Han majority population than the Manchus or Mongols did. Although some went into exile in Manchuria because of their participation in anti-Japanese movements, most of the Koreans were in fact peasants who resettled from the peninsula to Manchuria merely to eke out a livelihood. Except for a small number of Koreans naturalized to Chinese nationality, the majority of Koreans, as subjects of the Japanese empire, were granted extraterritorial rights on the land of northeastern China. Since the northeastern government did not recognize the land ownership of non-Chinese nationalities, Korean peasants had to turn to the Oriental Development Company 東洋拓殖 and East Asia Industrial Company 東亞勸業, semi-national enterprises controlled by the Japanese government, for land leases. Influenced by the independence movement in Korea in 1919, many Korean youth in Manchuria had much sympathy for the nationalist and even socialist movement. In the eyes of the Chinese government and local Han Chinese, however, these behaviors of the Koreans marked them as Japanese collaborators and threats to China's sovereignty in the Northeast. The lands of Chinese people were seized by the Japanese who then gave it to the Koreans, and the Japanese enlarged their control over China's Northeast by encouraging Korean settlement and claiming consular jurisdiction. Even if some of the Koreans participated in anti-Japanese activities, the northeastern government feared their socialist sympathies of furthering "the bane of communizing the Northeast."

Therefore, Korean-Chinese conflicts became tense on the eve of the establishment of Manchukuo. Starting from 1924, the local government in northeastern China, in the name of

[90] Li and Cribb, *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895-1945*, 90-106.

"countering foreign intrusion on education rights," commanded to shut down all Korean-run private schools, force Korean students to go to Han Chinese schools, and stipulated that the previous Korean schools must have Han Chinese as principals and instructors.[91] The Wanpaoshan Incident in July 1931, two months before the Manchurian Incident, marks the apex of Chinese hostility toward the Koreans. The incident was sparked by a dispute over irrigation rights between Korean and Chinese farmers near Changchun. The Koreans were attacked by furious Chinese peasants and the Japanese police arrived and opened fire at the Chinese mob. Then, massive anti-Chinese riots broke out in Korea while anti-Korean violence was said to take place in Manchuria as well.[92] The Wanpaoshan Incident did not come to a resolution because of the interruption of the Manchurian Incident; neither did the Korean-Chinese tension ease after the Japanese invasion.

The turbulent first two years following the Manchurian Incident remained in the memories of ethnic Koreans not as a climax of anti-Japanese struggle, but as a period of crime and disorder. Although the major anti-Japanese force, the Northeastern Army, retreated from Manchuria in January 1932, small groups of remaining militias, peasant rebels, and bandits were still in fight with the Japanese and Manchukuo armies. In Panshi 磐石, to the south of Jilin, the guerrilla resistance led by Li Hongguang (Yi Honggwang, 李紅光) famously made this farming county the center of anti-Japanese military activities in southern Manchuria in the CCP's official

[91] Chaoxianzu jianshi bianxie zu, *Chaoxianzu jianshi*, 67-68.
[92] *Chosŏn Ilbo*, a major newspaper of colonial Korea, reported that a great number of Koreans were killed in the Wanpaoshan Incident, which immediately resulted in anti-Chinese riots in Korea. In cities including Inch'ŏn, P'yŏngyang, Pusan, and Ch'ŏnan, where large Chinese populations resided, the stores and houses owned by Chinese were destroyed by Korean rioters. See Pak, *Manbosan saggŏn yŏngu*. For Korean victims, a Japanese officer in Changchun claimed that over 10,000 Koreans were killed in Jilin Province. *New York Times*, Nov 5, 1931. Although the Japanese account may be fabricated, it is reasonable to imagine the anti-Korean sentiment among Chinese peasants in Manchuria at this time.

history.[93] But in the narrative of Yi (Panshi), who experienced the turmoil as a three-year-old child, Panshi was described as "a den of robbers."[94] One night, half a month before the Manchurian Incident, Yi's maternal aunt walked nine miles in heavy rain to his home and told Yi's family to take shelter in a Han landlord's house. The benevolent landlord suggested they wear black clothes instead of white (because white clothes were often considered Korean) and gave them his own clothes. Yi did not specifically explain the reason why his family needed to hide out during the turbulence, but we can infer from this how vulnerable the Korean peasants were in the Sino-Japanese conflict in Manchuria before the founding of Manchukuo.[95]

In early September 1932, a former brigadier in the Northeastern Army, Song Guorong 宋國榮, staged a mutiny and attacked the town of Panshi. In the official history in present-day China, this "Panshi Incident" exemplifies a remarkable example of anti-Japanese struggle in Manchuria led by the Chinese Communist Party. In this battle, Song's battalion, Chang Zhan's *Shanlin dui* 山林隊, a local bandit group, and Li Hongguang's peasant guerillas, the Red Army 赤衛隊, all worked together under the leadership of the Panshi County Committee branch of the CCP.[96] Hearing the news of the battle, however, thousands of Koreans, as well as Yi's family, rushed to move inside of the town wall, where the Japanese garrison was located, "in order to survive."[97] The Koreans stuck inside the town were left to starve for five days until three Koreans escaped the seige and rallied the Japanese troops to "liberate" them.[98] In Yi's eyes, the

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[93] Chaoxianzu jianzhi bianxie zu, ibid., 96-97.
[94] Kang, ibid., 2:28. Since my oral history source only provides the interviewees' last name, to avoid confusions about personnel names, I will distinguish my interviewees based on their places of origin mentioned in their stories, to be noted in parentheses after their last names, as in Pak (Yanbian), Kim (Mudanjiang), etc.
[95] The threat in the countryside did not only come from the bandits but also from the peasant guerillas, who attacked local civilian militias, executed landlords, and established Soviet zones. See *Panshi wenshi ziliao*, 9:11-25.
[96] *Panshi wenshi ziliao*, 5:85-91. For the organizations of *Shanlin dui* and the Red Army, see *Panshi wenshi ziliao*, 8:124-132
[97] Kang, ibid., 2:29.
[98] Ibid., 2:30.

anti-Japanese army led by the CCP was merely a group of warlord militias and bandits and the "three warriors," who were later extolled by the Japanese authority, did not act on behalf of the Japanese but to "rescue our people."[99]

From Yi's narrative, we can see the ambivalence of Korean peasants squeezed between Japanese colonialism and Chinese nationalism. On one hand, they resented the Japanese for making them into colonized subordinates, but, on the other hand, they needed the protection and support from this colonial power to survive on the land in Manchuria. Hyun Ok Park interprets this complex triangular relationship as "two dreams in one bed"—that is, both the Koreans and the Japanese needed the common "bed" of global capitalism but for different ends, national independence versus modernization. The social relationship between the Koreans and the Japanese authority was not merely determined by economic terms, but also by politics and ethnic conflicts. Yi's terrified recollection of the Panshi Incident implicitly reifies the Koreans' support, at that historical moment, for building a new order and replacing the ethnic policy of the Chinese warlord government in the Northeast. It was in the context of these grassroots concerns that the project of Manchukuo was attractive, at least originally, to many interviewees in this study.

***Minzu xiehe* as an Alternative to Assimilation**

Until the late 1930s, the ideology of assimilation (*dōka* 同化) had dominated Japan's colonial affairs. Starting in the Meiji period (1868-1912), Japan rushed to recast itself as a "modern state," based on the principle of sovereignty and territory, and thus peripheral groups, such as the Ainu in Hokkaido and Ryukyuans in southern islands, were integrated into the new

[99] Ibid., 2:29-31.

notion of *kokumin* (Japanese subjects).[100] In colonial Korea, although the Japanese authority realized the presence of strong ethnic consciousness, it proceeded with the long-term pursuit of assimilation until the 1930s. Embarrassed by the massive anti-Japanese movement in Korea in 1919, however, the second Governor General of Korea, Hasegawa Yoshimichi, insisted in his report to his successor, Saitō Makoto, that "the policy of assimilation has been fixed since the time of annexation" and "even if assimilation entails many difficulties, diligent effort will obtain the goal."[101] Then, the following governor general Saitō adopted the well-known "culture-rule" policy in 1920s Korea, permitting Korean-language publications, social organizations, and participation in local politics.[102] Despite this soft-line assimilation policy, the Korean nationalism was never eradicated but instead transformed into "cultural nationalism," which advocated for social reconstruction (*sahoe kejo* 社會改造) and self-strengthening (*sillyŏk yangsŏng* 實力養成) for national independence in the future.[103]

In Taiwan, the Japanese authority held less expectations for assimilation. Nitobe Inazō, an agricultural advisor to the colonial government in Taiwan, predicted in 1912 that "I think assimilation will be found easier in Korea, for the reason that the Korean race is very much allied to our own. In Formosa, assimilation will be out of the question for long years to come, and we shall not try to force it."[104] As the assimilation policy did not prove successful in Korea, the Japanese colonialists' illusion was substantially ruined on Taiwan by the Musha (Wushe) Incident in 1930. An indigenous group attacked Japanese civilians and was retaliated against

[100] Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State." For the historical process of incorporating the Ainu and Ryukyuans into the "Japanese nation," see Oguma, *"Nihonjin" no kyōkai*, 18-70; Katsuya, "Settler Colonialism in the making of Japan's Hokkaidō."
[101] Devine, "Japanese Rule in Korea after the March First Uprising," 529-530.
[102] Moody, "The Security of 'Cultural Rule' in Korea."
[103] Robinson, "Ideological Schism in the Korean Nationalist Movement, 1920-1930."
[104] Nitobe, *The Japanese Nation*, 256, quoted in Ching, *Becoming "Japanese,"* 101.

brutally by the colonial government. The subsequent Japanese repression soon provoked anti-colonial sentiment among the local Taiwanese society. Then, in an internal report of the colonial government in the 1930s, the police department ascribed Taiwanese people's resistance against assimilation to "their dormant, narrow-minded ethno-national consciousness," which came from the Han ethnos' "language, thoughts, beliefs, manners, and customs."[105] Therefore, even though the Japanese empire claimed the racial commonality between itself (*naichi*) and its colonies (Korea and Taiwan) to legitimate its assimilation project, the reality revealed how ambiguous and inclusive the notion of assimilation could be. As Leo Ching observes, "the discursive regime of *dōka* was ambivalent and, at times, accommodating to the specificity of the colonial society."[106]

Nevertheless, the ideology of *minzu xiehe* in Manchukuo deviated strikingly from the doctrine of assimilation. As many historians on Japanese colonialism have noted, the language of assimilation implied a fundamental asymmetrical relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. Colonialism embodied in the discourse of assimilation presented the colonizers as engaged in a civilizing mission to efface the "backward" ethnic identity of the colonized peoples. Nationalism, although based on another form of collective consciousness, followed the same pattern of eradication and homogenization of the population in the name of the "nation." However, in Manchukuo, as Prasenjit Duara interprets it, *minzu xiehe* was both anti-colonialist and anti-nationalist, for it not only rejected exploitation of the ruled by ruler, but also "counters the homogenization of differences produced by nationalism itself."[107] For many Japanese intellectuals and low-rank officials in Manchuria, the utopian ideal of *kyōwa* (*minzu xiehe*)

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[105] Ching, *Becoming "Japanese,"* 59-60.
[106] Ching, ibid., 95-96.
[107] Duara, ibid., 73.

attracted them to the Manchukuo project, not only to confront the hegemony of the Western powers, but also to revitalize the "Eastern traditions."[108] The planners of Manchukuo believed that harmony between ethnic groups was originally embedded in the "Eastern spirits" of *ren'ai* (benevolence) and *wangdao* (moral state).[109]

To render the equalitarian ideal of *minzu xiehe* visible, the Japanese government prepared to abolish its claims to extraterritorial rights as early as the declaration of the founding of Manchukuo in 1932.[110] With two treaties signed in 1936 and 1937, Japan renounced all privileges of Japanese nationals within the territory of Manchukuo, as well as transferred authority over the Manchurian Railway Zone.[111] Accordingly, the Koreans in Manchuria were no longer under the administration of Japanese consulates but handed over to the local government of Manchukuo. Although Manchukuo did not officially have Nationality Laws, the abolishment of extraterritoriality was understood by Koreans as having changed their legal identity from Japanese nationals to holding "double nationality."[112] At the same time, the Manchukuo government launched the New School System (*xinxuezhi*) in 1938, which desegregated schools. Since the founding of Manchukuo, the Korean-run educational institutions, where instructors and students were mostly Korean, were permitted to remain in operation. But the New School System unified the difference in primary education between the six-year Chinese system (*xiaoxuexiao* 小學校) and the four-year Korean system (*pot'ong hakkyo* 普通學校), which facilitated more Korean children to go to Chinese-run schools if there was no Korean schools in

108 Duara, ibid., 61-65.
109 The Proclamation of the Government of Manchukuo (*Manzhouguo zhizheng xuanyan*) states, "now we should establish morality and benevolence as the main doctrine of our country, and we should eradicate ethnic discrimination and national conflicts." *Manshū nenkan*, 1:45. For more discussions on the idea of *wangdao*, see Duara, ibid., 101-102; 111-122.
110 Liu, "A State without Nationals," 29.
111 Han, "The Problem of Sovereignty," 463. For the history of extraterritoriality renouncement, see Asano, "Manshūkoku ni okeru chigaihōken mondai to kokusekihō"; Yamamuro and Fogel, ibid., 232.
112 Kang, ibid., 1:47.

their regions.[113] Korean students felt they were treated equally as the Manchukuo citizens, in terms of the school system, historical education, and even food rationing (if still inferior to what the Japanese received).[114]

This perception of equality under Manchukuo is evident in our interviewees' memories. Kim (Mudanjiang) lived in a small village called Sidaolingzi 四道嶺子, twenty kilometers away from Mudanjiang, where he attended high school (*guomin gaodeng xuexiao* 國高). There was a signal station at his village but the train, which went to Mudanjiang, did not stop at the station. As the number of students from his village attending high school increased, Kim felt that it was necessary to appeal to the authority about this issue. Kim went to see the head of the Mudanjiang station, who was unable to deal with this matter, and then Kim visited the commissioner of the railway bureau. The commissioner, who was Japanese, did not neglect the appeal from this youth, but he called a division chief and promised Kim that "we should help you," asking him to "wait for four days."[115] As the train started to stop at his village a few days later, Kim took pride in accomplishing a great thing for his village, as well as having the courage to stand up to the Japanese authorities.

But if we further think about Kim's story, it does not merely reveal his courage, but also repeats a paradigmatic story of *minzu xiehe* in a seemingly fictional way. In other words, Kim story, of a benevolent Japanese ruler and a dutiful imperial subject, appears to be completely fabricated as those valueless stories which we might find in any of the wartime Japanese propaganda materials. Nevertheless, this story indeed survived as a part of Kim's memory and

[113] Several interviewees who lived in regions with no Korean schools all ended up attending Chinese schools instead. See Kang, ibid., 1:6; 1:195; 2:33; 2:62-63. For ethnic Koreans' criticism on the difference between school systems, see Kang, ibid., 1:9.
[114] Kang, ibid., 1:6-7.
[115] Ibid., 2:82.

Kim himself is by no means a maniacal fascist who tries to whitewash Japanese imperialism (as we will see in more of Kim's stories in the following chapters). In this sense, Kim's story constitutes a contradiction between memory and history. Based on analysis of military strategy and conflicts for power, historians tend to belittle *minzu xiehe* purely as a tool of the Japanese colonialist rule, but few have been concerned with how people from below, from the minority, perceived this colonialist tool. Kim's memory reveals that *minzu xiehe* was indeed understood in a positive light as an alternative to assimilation. Certainly, my study is unable to show whether Kim's story represents the whole experience of ethnic Koreans. Historians should not take the part for the whole but, reversely, we should neither take the "whole" for part. The paradigmatic narrative of all Koreans despising *minzu xiehe* as a complete deception unravels by the memory of Kim, an ordinary individual, as teleological hindsight. Situating the ideology of *minzu xiehe* in the milieu of an era of colonial hegemony, Manchurian Koreans' adoption of the utopian idealization of harmony and equality between ethnic groups was not completely incomprehensible.

Identification beyond Ethnicity

Shortly after the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident, the League of Nations appointed its Commission of Inquiry to investigate the ongoing Sino-Japanese conflict in Manchuria. The commission, led by the second Earl of Lytton, submitted its report to the League in September 1932, which came to be known as the "Lytton report." Although Manchukuo had declared its independence earlier, the report supported China's sovereignty over Manchuria, stating that "Manchuria is now unalterably Chinese."[116] Thereafter, Manchukuo famously became Japan's

[116] League of Nations Commission of Enquiry on Manchuria, "The Far Eastern Problem: Official Texts and Summary of the Lytton Report," 63.

puppet state and few countries in the world recognized its independence. In both the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, Manchukuo is officially called as the "False Manchukuo" (*Wei Manzhouguo*). Yamamuro Shinichi metaphorically describes Manchukuo as a "chimera," a fictional dream made up of jingoism, imperialism, and restorationism.[117] Denying the legitimacy of Manchukuo, however, cannot simultaneously efface the reality of the existence of its thirteen-year rule and its influences on its people. To the ethnic Koreans, rule under Manchukuo, hoisting the banner of *minzu xiehe,* substantially transformed their sense of collective identity.

An interesting anecdote provided by Byŏn demonstrates the Koreans' ambivalent identification under Manchukuo. Byŏn lived in a small town called Linjiang 臨江 of Tonghua Province, where the majority of the population was Japanese. In 1942, Byŏn, then fifteen years of age, worked at a building materials store and once he was asked by the Korean owner of the store to chase after a bunch of Japanese customers who had not paid for their goods. Byŏn did so without any fear since he thought, "there is no difference between the Japanese and me because in elementary school we all use the Japanese language."[118] When Byŏn caught up those Japanese women, he became upset by how those "low-down women" (*yŏp'yŏnne*) humiliated his ethnicity as Korean with the phrase, "*senkei no kuse ni* (鮮系の癖に)." In Byŏn's view, "*senkei no kuse ni*" implies two humiliating meanings—*senkei* degrades the Korean people as a subgroup of the Yamato nation and moreover, in Japanese, "*no kuse ni*" (meaning "even though") implies the speaker's negative attitude toward the object, often a phrase used to look down upon that to which it refers. Byŏn's story, as his first encounter with ethnic difference, was unpleasant and

[117] Yamamuro and Fogel, ibid., 6-8.
[118] Kang, ibid, 2:4.

surprising to both him and us. It is not intuitive to imagine that the colonized people truly believed in their homogeneity and/or equality with the colonizers. Some historians might wonder how Byŏn could grow up without awareness of any trace of the unequal ethnic power relations, given numerous examples of Manchukuo's discriminatory policies. But living years under this cosmopolitan illusion is unlikely a mere result of Japanese language education, as Byŏn explained, but also the result of a substantial promulgation of a unique form of collective identity beyond conventional ethnic categories.

While Prasenjit Duara considers this new collective identity to have originated from the fact that Manchukuo constructed itself as a nation-state, I argue that the new sense of identity under Manchukuo was more based on ideology and values than simply on the notion of the "modern nation." Consider Kim's (Mudanjiang) experience. As mentioned, Kim attended the most prestigious high school in the Mudanjiang region, where he took particular pride in its faculty. According to him, those teachers were all highly educated intellectuals from upper-class Japanese families, and the principal, Tanaka, was the most impressive figure to Kim among them. Once Kim, along with his Korean classmates, fought with a group of Japanese students from another school. Kim was frightened of being suspended from school, but Principal Tanaka said to him, "Did you fight? Did you win or lose? You have to win. Should my student lose to those Japanese students?"[119] Tanaka did not punish Kim, but only lectured him how he should behave as a respectable student. When he grew up, Kim himself became a principal and he always thought of Tanaka later in life. To Kim, what made Tanaka respectful was not merely his humane style of education but, more importantly, his equal treatment toward different ethnic groups. Here Kim clearly realized the inequality between Japanese and Koreans. But the reason

[119] Ibid., 2:85.

why Kim found Tanaka admirable is not because Kim supported Korean-Japanese homogeneity but for the ideology behind Tanaka's behavior, his embrace of equality between all ethnic groups.[120]

Then, one day in 1944, on the eve of Japan's surrender, Tanaka summoned all of the students to a meeting. In a speech, Tanaka apologized to his students, consisting of Korean and Chinese, saying: "we all contribute to the building of Manchukuo with the pursuits of *wangdao letu* and *minzu xiehe*, but we failed to do so. Because we Japanese rulers have not taken these goals seriously and look down upon Chinese people and Korean people…"[121] In the end, Tanaka continued to preach Pan-Asianist clichés, calling for the unity of all Asian peoples to fight against the U.S. More interestingly, Kim was deeply convinced and touched by Tanaka's words. Kim believed that although there were many Japanese in Manchuria who had made mistakes, that was not the original intention of His Imperial Majesty, who wished all Asian peoples to unite and resist against "Anglo-American imperialism" and "Russian Red Imperialism."[122] Call it brainwashing, naivety, or false consciousness, but Kim's appreciation of the sentiments in Principal Tanaka's speech suggests that under Manchukuo a unique form of identification that went beyond ethnic boundaries had become established. In Kim's memory, Tanaka reflected his own yearnings for a harmonic "new world" and his idealization of all ethnic groups being treated equally and humanely. If this was the pursuit of Manchukuo, as Tanaka claimed, Kim was willing to sacrifice for the Japanese empire to the end. We see that what led to Kim's loyalty to

[120] In fact, many Japanese intellectuals serving as low-rank bureaucrats or teachers in Manchukuo were influenced by socialist and communist ideas. For instance, the Manchurian Railway Company (Mantetsu) is well-known for having numerous Japanese communist intellectuals. During the Mantetsu Research Department Incident between 1941 and 1943, the Kwantung Army arrested more than forty Mantetsu bureaucrats on suspicion of communist activities. See Kobayashi, *Mantetsu*; O'Dwyer, "Mantetsu Democracy."
[121] Kang, ibid., 2:84.
[122] Ibid., 2:86.

the Japanese empire was his value affiliation, a hybrid of equalitarianism, Pan-Asianism, and anti-colonialism, rather than the ethnos brotherhood sentiment imagined by nationalism.

Blurred Ethnic Boundaries

No one can deny that colonialism constructs an unequal relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. But does this unequal relationship always result in dichotomous ethnic imaginations? Namely, did the Japanese always perceived themselves as dominant, while the Koreans always regarded themselves as submissive? In her book, *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt denotes the phenomenon of "transculturation" in colonial empires, about "how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture."[123] In the case of ethnic Koreans, our interviewees' memories disclose how they internalized the fluid and contingent perception of ethnicity from Manchukuo's colonial power. On one hand, the colonial propaganda of *minzu xiehe* blurred the imagined ethnic boundaries in the minds of many younger generation Koreans who grew up under Manchukuo. On the other hand, the "ethnic distinctiveness" promised by the idea of "ethnic concordia" offered Koreans a conceptual framework within which to legitimately counter colonial inequality under the colonial context.

When under Manchukuo, Chŏng, living in Hsinking (Changchun), the capital of Manchukuo, believed that "Japanese and we all are in the same group (*hanp'ae*). I do not have any idea of our 'ethnicity'…The Manchurian Empire and we are in the same group. Japanese, Korean, and Chinese, we are all in the same group. We have to win the war."[124] Kim (Zhuhe), then living in Zhuhe County 珠河 in northern Manchuria, experienced the conflict between the

[123] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6.
[124] Kang, ibid., 1:197.

"enslaving" education he received from his school and the "national sentiment" in his family. On the one hand, Kim denounced Japan for invading Korea and felt inspired by the stories of Kim Il-sung's anti-Japanese guerillas told to him by his family. On the other hand, he thought the Koreans should follow the Japanese empire because Japan was more progressive and civilized. Around the eve of Japan's surrender, Kim was desperate since he believed that the Japanese conferred upon Koreans privileges, such as giving more food rations (compared to the Chinese). He feared that Koreans would not be able to survive if the Japanese left.[125] For Chŏng and Kim, the forthcoming defeat of Japan resulted in anxiety, not excitement. They felt mournful toward the fall of the Japanese empire, and in this sense, their reaction was not so different from many Japanese in the metropole. Their ethnic consciousness was contingent upon their belief that the Koreans in Manchuria shared common interests and destiny with the Japanese empire.

Chŏng and Kim's examples are not to imply that the sense of inequality was eliminated in the minds of the Koreans living under Manchukuo. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, all schools in Korea were required to implement Japanese language education, which was soon enforced among the Korean community in Manchuria. The enforcement of Japanese language education in 1938, together with forced adoption of Japanese names in 1940 and conscription in 1943, constituted the notorious *kōminka* (imperialization 皇民化) project. Unlike the earlier stages of assimilation and ethnic harmony, *kōminka* aimed at total homogenization, which "turns a project (assimilation) into a practice, by rendering the ideal into the material."[126] Our interviewees revealed their resentment toward this project. During that period, while Kim (Mudanjiang) once was speaking Korean with his friends in the playground, his principal, a Korean, took Kim to his office and hit him with a cane. Hearing the story, Kim's brother rushed

[125] Ibid., 2:160.
[126] Ching, *Becoming "Japanese,"* 96.

to the school and was going to argue with the principal, but eventually was beaten as well. Although the principal planned to suspend Kim, Kim's father begged in front of the principal for his son to continue studying, a scene which Kim would never forget.[127] To counter against Korean-Japanese homogenization, a noticeable number of Korean teachers secretly taught Korean history and geography, which were prohibited after 1938.[128]

Resistance against the Japanese still was not an option for most Koreans to survive their everyday life in Manchukuo. As Timothy Brook points out in his study of Japanese-occupied southern China, "many (of the local Chinese people) simply saw no alternative to going along with what the Japanese wanted."[129] Brook's observation aligns with the case of the ethnic Koreans in Manchukuo. According to the memories of our interviewees, many Koreans converted to Japanese names simply to secure employment.[130] Korean villagers joined the "Self-defense Army," the Japanese tool to root out anti-Japanese guerillas, which ensured that their food rations would not be terminated.[131] Korean students put much effort into learning the Japanese language, which was required for almost any occupation.[132] Besides the goal to survive, during the Manchukuo period, a remarkable number of Koreans worked as low-rank government officers, middle school teachers, local police, and military translators for various reasons.[133] Some Koreans chose to work in Manchukuo in order to escape from conscription in Korea.[134] Some Korean police would specifically protect and take care of the local Koreans.[135] The famously "pro-Japanese" Korean organization, Korean People's Association 朝鮮人民會, in fact

[127] Kang, ibid., 2:153-154.
[128] Ibid., 1:5; 2:59.
[129] Brook, *Collaboration*, 3.
[130] Kang, ibid., 1:75.
[131] Ibid., 1:95.
[132] Ibid., 1:154.
[133] Ibid., 1:39; 1:142; 1:195; 2:12.
[134] Ibid., 2:99.
[135] Ibid., 1:157.

provided substantial support to promote the living conditions of the impoverished Koreans in the countryside.[136]

The deeply intertwined "collaboration" of the Koreans with the Japanese colonial authority, whether voluntary or coerced, forced them to redefine their ethnic consciousness. Under such a relationship, the Koreans were no longer able to rigidly perceive "Korean" as the repressed and "Japanese" as the ruler. Indeed, they turned to a more instrumentalist view of ethnicity. Koreans were convinced by the "Manchurian dream" that if they could gain achievement in the land of the "new world," they would enter the ranks of the "superior Japanese." Kim (Mudanjiang) admits that when he was in elementary school, he thought that Japan was a great country with an emperor who loved his subjects and that if Koreans put in effort to learn Japanese, their own achievements would match those of the Japanese.[137] During his elementary school, Kim even dreamed of becoming a Japanese military officer after growing up.[138] The Koreans also had aspirations to succeed in the colonial regime. Within the Manchukuo bureaucracy, the governors were mainly Chinese (whether Manchu or Han), while the vice governors were all Japanese. Thus, when the Yi Pŏm-ik 李範益 was appointed governor of Jiandao Province 間島省 (present-day Yanbian region), the Koreans in Manchuria looked upon him with great pride and admiration.[139]

A similar appreciation of Koreans' achievements in Manchuria is shown in the example of Chung Il-kwon. Chung, later well-known as a central figure of Park Chung Hee's regime in 1960s South Korea, is oftentimes accused by South Korean historians of actively serving in the Manchukuo army. However, from the viewpoint of Koreans in Manchuria, Chung's inspiring

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136 Ibid., 1:18-19.
137 Ibid, 2:61.
138 Ibid, 2:87.
139 Ibid, 1:34.

advancement from a part-time student to a military police commander, the highest position that Korean bureaucrats in Manchukuo reached, was at the time considered extraordinary and worthy of respect.[140] Moreover, Chung's example epitomizes a model of how Koreans could make their own way in the new land of Manchukuo. Identity as Korean under the Manchukuo regime was pulled between imperial aspirations and colonial inequality. This contested form of ethnic identity blurred the imagined boundaries between the Japanese as oppressor and the Koreans as oppressed. It contributed to an ethnic consciousness of Manchurian Koreans as a fluid, contingent construct, floating between self-distinction and Pan-Asianist homogenization.

Conclusion

As Timothy Brook notes, "the story of China under Japanese occupation, hitherto told as a tale of resistance, would become as well a story of collaboration. As indeed it has."[141] Conventionally, historians guided by contemporary nationalism have loathed the catchwords of "*minzu xiehe*" and "new world" 新天地, as simply the propaganda of Japanese imperialism used to deceive the colonized people. But in the memories of some Manchurian Koreans, such a monolithic perspective was incomprehensible. Rather than dismiss such reactions as "false consciousness," it is clear that some Koreans living under Manchukuo were substantially influenced by the new ideals promulgated by the colonial government. Particularly for the generation schooled in Manchukuo, the equalitarian principle of *minzu xiehe* and the myth of the "Manchurian dream" partially dissolved the identitarian boundaries of ethnos that Korean subjects perceived with either the Japanese or the Chinese. Despite the existence of formal and informal discrimination, ethnic identity was utilized by ethnic Koreans in a fluid way, contingent

[140] Ibid, 1:64.
[141] Brook, ibid., 240.

upon different circumstances. For instance, when they felt discriminated against by Japanese officials, they associated themselves closer to the identity of Korean. By contrast, when they sought for individual success in Manchukuo society, they dismissed the ethnic boundaries between Koreans and Japanese or Chinese. Therefore, the equalitarian discourse of *minzu xiehe,* it seems, permitted a modicum of freedom to adopted fluid, contingent, and somewhat instrumentalist attitudes toward identity for ethnic Koreans.

As this chapter shows, ethnic Koreans' memories tell us a different story from the conventional perspective of the oppression-resistance dichotomy. After the collapse of the Qing empire, Manchuria witnessed a remarkable growth in settlement, even as conflicts between different ethnic groups emerged. Following the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the tension between Japan and China drove the Koreans in Manchuria to the edge of crisis. At this moment, the idea of *minzu xiehe* espoused by the newly founded Manchukuo attracted Koreans into the colonial regime. A not neglegible number of Koreans, especially among the well-educated, embraced the utopian view of *minzu xiehe* beyond their ethnic consciousness and collaborated with the project of "building Manchukuo." During this process, the ethnic boundaries of Koreans with Japanese and Chinese (either the Manchu or Han) were no longer perceived as immutable demarcation lines but as fluid, pluralist, and contingent. These memories remind us that it is fundamentally problematic to overlook the historical agency of the colonized, the minority, as well as the peripheralized, and to downplay their position in history as the "Other" outside the colonial project. Recognizing the role of ethnic Koreans in building the "new world," however, is neither to condemn their complicity as "collaborators" nor to gainsay the inequality of colonialism. Rather, this chapter has investigated the unique form of ethnic imagination of the Koreans in Manchukuo, a phenomenon that has received little attention from previous studies of occupied China.

3

Fanshen and the Making of a "Model Minority"

> "In particular this favorable political milieu of the "once-in-a-blue-moon" moment of Korean national liberation is influencing the Korean people in northeastern China and Yanbian, consolidating their ethnic consciousness. (Ethnic Koreans) can by no means be assimilated by the Great Han nationalism." (Zhou Baozhong, "Yanbian chaoxian minzu wenti")

William H. Hinton interprets *fanshen* 翻身 (literally, "to turn over") as the most important word among the new vocabulary created by the Chinese communist revolution. Compared to "liberation," *fanshen* refers to a wider range of transformations as China "enter[ed] a new world" represented by science, literacy, gender equality, and democratic election.[142] What is missing in Hinton's list is how ethnic minority groups experienced *fanshen*. In the conventional historical terminology of China, the meaning of *fanshen* nearly aligns with *jiefang* ("liberation"), that is, being liberated from the inhuman rule of landlords or capitalists. However, in the narratives of ethnic Koreans, "liberation" must be distinguished from *fanshen*, as "liberation" (*haebang*) more particularly refers to the surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945, which liberated Koreans, both in Manchuria and on the Korean peninsula, from decades-long colonial rule. The disjuncture of ethnic Koreans' collective memory with the Han-centered historical narrative of "liberation" reminds scholars of the dual meaning of *fanshen*. For the ethnic Koreans in northeastern China, the turbulent years between 1945 to 1950 are remembered

[142] Hinton, *Fanshen*, viii.

as the era of *fanshen* in two senses: the official definition of the "turning over" from the old colonialist regime; and a less noticeable process of entering a new "ethnicized world" wherein their ethnicity was reimagined.

As Steven I. Levine points out in his 1987 book, *Anvil of Victory,* "to most students of the Chinese Communist movement, the revolutionary civil war of 1946-1949, which brought the Chinese Communist Party to power, remains virtually terra incognita," and his observation is still seemingly valid today.[143] The existing historical works on the Chinese civil war period can be divided into two main categories. A large group of studies treat the civil war period as a stage, if not fully distinct from other stages, of the Chinese Communist Party's revolutionary history. In this narrative, the CCP's victory is interpreted teleologically as "predetermined," by not only land reform, the inefficiency of the Kuomintang regime, or the CCP's military leadership during the civil war, but also the CCP's long struggle against "feudalism, imperialism, and capitalism," as representative of the Chinese masses.[144] Another trend, since the opening up of Soviet archives, tends to establish a broader context for the Chinese civil war, as a prelude to the global Cold War. This group of Cold War historians focus on the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, the CCP and the KMT, or the CCP and the Soviet Union during this period.[145] Influenced by the two trends, the scholarship with regard to northeastern China during the civil war are predominantly concerned with the CCP's regime-building, military strategy, and international relations.[146]

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[143] Levine, *Anvil of Victory*, 2
[144] For English-language studies on the civil-war-era, see Hinton, *Fanshen*; Pepper, *Civil War in China*; Chen, *Zhongguo gongchan geming qishi nian*, vol. 1.
[145] Representative works include Westad, *Cold War and Revolution*; Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War,* 1-48; Yang, *Yang Kuisong zhuzuo ji*, 3:583-845; Shen, *Wunai de xuanze*.
[146] See Levine, *Anvil of Victory*; Tanner, *The Battle for Manchuria and the Fate of China*; *Where Chiang Kai-shek Lost China*; Uemura, Ōno, and Izutani, *Mansyū no sengō*; Sui, *Chūgoku tōhoku ni okeru Kyōsantō to kisō minshū, 1945-1951*.

The question of how ordinary people, especially conventionally marginalized groups, experienced the Chinese civil war has received little attention from historians until very recently. Frank Dikötter's *The Tragedy of Liberation* is among the pioneering works pointing to the mass sufferings of ordinary people during the civil war years.[147] Diana Lary's *China's Civil War* presents the profound impacts of the civil war on Chinese society as collective trauma. Recently, the experiences of the Koreans in the Chinese civil war have drawn attention from historians in South Korea, although most of their studies make no effort to challenge an essentialized identification of "Korean."[148]

As I argue earlier, the ethnic consciousness among the Koreans in Manchukuo was multifaceted and ambiguous. The Koreans came to terms with the Manchukuo's ideology of *minzu xiehe* (concordia of ethnos), which led to a fluid, sometimes instrumentalist, perception of ethnicity. Namely, their illusions of *minzu xiehe* blurred the boundaries between essentialist ethnic categories into a novel egalitarian and cosmopolitan (if overly idealized) sense of identity. Prior to 1945, the Manchukuo side, too, did not hold a consistent view with regard to the identity of the Koreans in Manchuria, who were treated as "dual nationalities" of both Manchukuo and Japan.[149] The Chinese Communist Party also had ambivalent categorizations of the Koreans in Manchuria, seeing them as both "Korean expatriates" (韓人) and as "an ethnic minority of China."[150] Clearly then, whether seen from the perspective of residents of Korean ethnicity in

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[147] Dikötter, *The Tragedy of Liberation*.

[148] Yŏm, *Tto hana ŭi Hanguk chŏnjaeng*; Kim, "Zhanhou zhongguo dongbei chaoxianren de 'chaoxianzu' hua guocheng."

[149] See Han, "The Problem of Sovereignty"; Liu, "A State without Nationals," 31-37; Morris-Suzuki, "Migrants, Subjects, Citizens."

[150] The CCP, on one hand, claimed its policy with regard to the Manchurian Koreans as assisting revolution in Korea. On the other hand, the CCP listed the Koreans in Manchuria as an ethnic minority group of China during its 6th National Congress in 1928. Zhonggong zhongyang tongzhanbu, *Minzu wenti wenxian huibian*, 87. The CCP Manchurian Committee put the affairs related to Manchurian Koreans under the Ethnic Minority Movement Committee (少數民族運動委員會) and proposed the principle of "the Korean comrades must be assimilated into

northeast China or from that of the emerging Party-state, "ethnicity" in post-colonial Manchuria was not a given fact; it was subject to a process of construction.

The ambiguity in the CCP understanding of the ethnicity of Koreans in Manchuria sets the ground for understanding how the transition into the CCP's new regime, the process of *fanshen*, rendered the ethnic identity of "*chaoxianzu*" identifiable. Thomas Mullaney has showed the process by which the modern epistemological system of ethnic taxonomy provided the basis for ethnic imagination in China's southwestern frontier.[151] In northeastern China, ethnic categories could hardly be seen as purely the immediate products of modernity, while neither did they map onto primordial communities. In fact, the imagination of *chaoxianzu* underwent a historical process shaped by the collective memory of Manchurian Koreans during the twentieth century. It was this critical juncture that gave the ethnicity significance. I argue that the Manchurian Koreans' Chinese civil war experiences of the "ethnicized new world" created the crucial conditions to reify their ethnicity; moreover, the Chinese civil war turns out to be a critical cultural symbol, to invoke the concept of Pierra Nora, a *lieu de mémoire*, through which their ethnic imagination took its shape.

Civil War as Memory

Although the end of the World War II opened up a new era of peace for most countries in the world, the collapse of Manchukuo led to devastation and suffering in Manchuria. The suffering of ethnic Koreans as a result of the ensuing war is frequently left out of conventional discussions of the Chinese civil war. On August 8, 1945, the Soviet Union declared war on

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the Chinese Party ("韓國同志必須中國黨化"). Zhonggong yanbian zhouwei dangshi yanjiushi, *Dongman diqu geming lishi wenxian huibian*, 916

[151] Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation*.

Japan's army and sent its troops into Manchuria from three directions. Although the Japanese emperor announced Japan's surrender on August 15, the order of surrender was not sent down by the Kwantung Army headquarter until the 20th.[152] During the ten days in between, the Soviet army engaged fierce battles with the Kwantung army in Suifenhe 綏芬河 and around the Mudanjiang area, where Koreans made up approximately 20 percent of the local population. The aforementioned Kim in Mudanjiang went to the Kwantung Army camp with his school to serve in public volunteer work (*kinrō hōshi*, 勤勞奉仕) in early 1945. Hearing the news that the Soviet army was moving in, Kim decided to escape from the Japanese garrison. But when he passed through all the Japanese checkpoints and arrived at the mountain before his hometown, he came upon a battle between the Japanese and the Soviet troops. Since his appearance and clothing could be mistaken for a Japanese soldier by the Soviet army, he hid in the mountain for three days until fire-fight ceased.[153] Other Korean students serving for *kinrō hōshi* were less fortunate. They were captured by the Soviet army as POWs, and it is said that by late 1945, there were more than ten thousand Koreans in the POW camps.[154]

By August 22, the Soviet army had already occupied all large cities and major railroads in Manchuria, including Harbin, Changchun, Jilin, Mukden, Mudanjiang, Yanji, etc. According to the Sino-Soviet treaty signed on August 14, the Soviet troops were supposed to completely withdraw from Manchuria within three months.[155] However, the Soviets turned Manchuria into a bargaining chip in negotiation with the Nationalist government and made all efforts to extract concessions from their occupation. In the name of war trophies, the Soviet army absconded with

[152] The Soviets intentionally postponed announcement of the date of surrender by several days so as to give its troops enough time to occupy all of Manchuria. See Hayashi, *Kantōgun to Kyokutō Sorengun*.
[153] Kang, *Kiŏk sok ŭi Manjuguk*, 2:117-120.
[154] Kim, *Chungguk chosŏnjok t'ongsa*, 48.
[155] Shen, "Sulian chubing zhongguo dongbei," 102.

tons of industrial equipment from both state-owned factories and private (including Korean-run) enterprises.[156] Pak, then working in a chemical factory in Jilin under the Japanese, witnessed how the Soviet army occupied the factory and seized all the equipment.[157] Moreover, Pak, as well as other Korean workers in the factory, was mistaken by the Soviet army as a Japanese POW and was impressed into forced labor for nearly a month. After Pak let a Soviet military officer know his Korean identity, he was permitted to return to his home in Yanbian. On his way, the train was filled with Korean refugees, and so Pak had to sit on the roof of the train. It was not safe even on the train. Pak, along with other Korean men, volunteered to stand guard over the Korean women travelling with them, since some Soviet soldiers had taken to robbing and raping the Korean women.[158]

In the vast rural regions of northern and eastern Manchuria, beyond the reach of the Soviet occupation, Korean peasants became the target of retaliation by Han Chinese. In the countryside, similar to the Soviet-occupied cities, Manchukuo bureaucrats came out to organize local self-governments, called *zhian weichihui* 治安維持會, and the main power was oftentimes in the hands of local armed forces, *baoandui* 保安隊, consisting of Manchukuo soldiers and police. These local powers, predominantly led by Han Chinese people, held deep-rooted hatred of the Koreans, whom they believed to have previously served as the henchmen of the Japanese in oppressing the Chinese. An interviewee surnamed Han recalls that when he, along with many Korean youth, took to the streets in Yanji to celebrate the liberation from Japanese rule, Chinese people shouted at them, "You '*gaoli bangzi*' (a derogatory term for Koreans akin to "Korean hoodlums") are no different from the Japanese. You are all invaders!" "Immediately hand over

156 Sun, *Zhongguo chaoxianzu yiminshi*, 634.
157 Kang, ibid., 1:18.
158 Ibid, 1:19.

your property and leave our country!"[159] In the small village of Luozigou 羅子溝 in Wangqing County 汪淸, the local *baoandui* massacred more than one hundred Korean villagers over a few days in November 1945.[160] In the Mudanjiang region, the Korean village Badagou 八達溝 was caught in a battle between local militias and CCP armies in May 1946, during which village cadres were massacred and tens of villagers were injured.[161] On May 26, the remaining militias massacred hundreds of Korean residents in a single day in Dongan 東安 (present-day Mishan 密山); more than two thousand Koreans were forced to flee to the Soviet Union.[162]

In the southern region of Manchuria, where the Nationalists established control, the Koreans were officially targeted for pillage and violence. In August 1945, the Nationalist government laid out its plan for taking over the Northeast: Koreans emigrants were all to be deported.[163] According to the law drafted by the Nationalist government's administration branch in Manchuria, *Dongbei xingying*, the property of Manchurian Koreans was to be confiscated or gradually handed over to the Chinese.[164] As a report from the local Korean community shows, in the countryside around Shenyang, the Nationalist soldiers wiped out the possessions of Koreans and even the crops of Korean peasants were taken by Chinese villagers on the grounds that "since the lands belong to our country, why should not we take the crops?"[165] When the Nationalist army took Changchun from the CCP in May 1946, local Chinese people's hostility against the Koreans resulted in a massacre of hundreds of Korean residents, later known as the

[159] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, *Chungguk Chosŏn Minjok Yŏksa Paljachwi Ch'ongsŏ*, 5:6.
[160] *Wangqing wenshi ziliao*, 6:148-150.
[161] Sun, ibid., 645.
[162] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:139.
[163] Shen, *Zuihou de "tianchao,"* 115.
[164] Sun, ibid., 633.
[165] Sun, ibid., 648.

"May 23 Incident."[166] A few days later, the Nationalist army occupied Jilin; a great number of local Korean youth were rounded up and sent to concentration camps.[167] One survivor witness surnamed Wŏn recalls that a Korean mother and her daughter were even gang raped by the Nationalist soldiers in Jilin. Because of the Nationalist's property forfeiture policy, Koreans in Manchuria fell into abject poverty. By January 1948, statistics show that more than 20,000 Koreans in the Nationalist-controlled zone had become refugees.[168] All of the one thousand Koreans in Changchun had been bankrupted for two years and Korean peasants in the countryside adjacent to Changchun were starving because of daily looting of their crops by bandits.[169]

Because of the violence, one million Manchurian Koreans embarked upon a mass exodus to the Korean peninsula, all in the midst of the intense war in northeastern China. As the GMD-CCP rivalry escalated after the surrender of Japan, both sides considered Manchuria as "a vital element in their struggle for power."[170] Military conflict in northeastern China continued from the fall of 1945 to late 1948, during which the communist troops crossed the Songhua River and swept through the major cities of Manchuria, a period the CCP termed as the "small fight in the interior, major war in Manchuria" 關內小打 關外大打. In 1948, the city of Changchun, the former capital of Manchukuo, was blockaded by the communist armies for five months during which at least 160,000 civilians starved to death.[171] According to statistics, from 1945 to 1947, the Korean population in Manchuria declined by one third. One Mr. Pak from Xingjing County 興京 recounts that starting in mid-1945, local Korean households with at least a modicum of

[166] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:599-602.
[167] Ibid., 5:596-598.
[168] *Tongbuk hanbo*, Jan 27, 1948.
[169] Ibid., April 17, 1948. Ibid., April 18, 1948.
[170] Levine, ibid., 23.
[171] Dikötter, ibid., 31.

wealth all chose to leave for Korea, but all the wealth they took with them was robbed by bandits en route.[172] Another survivor surnamed Pak (in Yanbian) also admits that if his family had had enough money at the time, he would have gone to Korea.[173] Even as late as March 1948, there were still around thirty Korean refugees every day who embarked upon a walking trek from Jinzhou 錦州 in the north to Tianjin, hoping to get to Korea.[174] By May, more than 1,000 penniless Korean refugees were stuck in Tianjin, waiting for ships heading to Korea.

The Chinese civil war became a memorable event for the ethnic Koreans in northeastern China. Such an event, as French historian Georges Duby observes, is "like the foam of history, bubbles large or small that burst at the surface and whose rupture triggers waves that travel varying distances. This one has left very enduring traces that are not yet completely erased today. It is those traces that bestow existence upon it." The recollection of suffering, discrimination, massacre, and dislocation constituted the collective memory of Koreans in Manchuria as a whole, who later, for the very first time, became "ethnic Koreans/*chaoxianzu*." Unlike the memories of the Manchukuo era, the civil war period experiences of terror, desperation, and isolation bound the Manchurian Koreans together in a way that distinguished them from other ethnic groups in the northeast. In this sense, the memories of the Chinese civil war are ethnicized. Namely, as described above, the memories of ethnic Koreans regarding the civil war are contingent upon different historical conditions than the Han-centered conventional narrative. Therefore, to Manchurian Koreans, the remembering of the Chinese civil war itself became an initial point, and more significantly a *lieu de mémoire*, a symbolic element of collective identity, in the process laying the basis for the burgeoning "ethnic Korean" community.

[172] Kang, ibid., 1:143.
[173] Ibid., 1:20.
[174] *Tongbuk hanbo*, Mar 27, 1948.

Ethnicized Mobilization

To protect themselves during the devastating civil war, the Koreans in Manchuria organized into ethnicity-based self-governing associations and social organizations. By early October 1945, the Korean People's Association 韓國僑民會 (KRA), in support of the Korean Provisional Government and the Chinese Nationalist government, had been organized in Mudanjiang, Harbin, Changchun, Siping, Fushun, Tonghua, etc.[175] Meanwhile, the Korean Independence League 朝鮮獨立同盟 (KIL) in Yan'an also played a significant role in mobilizing Manchurian Koreans.[176] In Harbin, the underground KIL activists founded the Northern Manchurian Special Committee of KIL (NMSC) on August 20, 1945 and its local branches rapidly spread to the surrounding counties of Harbin.[177] Within merely three months, the NMSC recruited two thousand Korean youth into its militia.[178] In southern Manchuria, following the CCP's order, major leaders of the KIL and its armed force, the Korean Volunteer Army 朝鮮義勇軍 (KVA), arrived at Shenyang and established the Southern Manchurian Committee of the KIL (SMC) in November 1945.[179] By early 1946, the SMC expanded its

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[175] Yŏm, ibid., 570-571. These organizations of *minhui* were normally led by former Manchukuo Korean bureaucrats, see "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, edit., ibid., 5:121-122.
[176] The Korean Independence League (KIL) was founded in the CCP's Taihang 太行 base area in 1942 during the Sino-Japanese war. The KIL was mainly founded to provide political leadership to the Korean Volunteer Army (KVA), which was originally founded under the Chinese Nationalist army as an armed force of Korean independence activists but turned to the CCP side after 1938. The central figures of the KIL and KVA later became the well-known "Yan'an faction" in the early years of Democratic People's Republic of Korea. For comprehensive studies on KIL and KVA, see Yŏm, *Chosŏn ŭiyongdae, chosŏn ŭiyonggun*.
[177] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:128-132.
[178] Yi and Sŏ, *Chosŏn ŭiyonggun 3 chidae*, 12-13.
[179] The KIL and KVA were supposed to leave for the Soviet-occupied northern Korea to establish an independent state of Korea, but only a few high-level leaders of the KIL were permitted by the Soviet occupation authority to enter into northern Korea. See Kim, "1945 nian 10 yue chaoxian yiyongjun xianqian zongdui ruchao jiqi shoucuo."

organization to more than twenty counties in southern Manchuria and the KVA in this region had grown into an armed force of five thousand Korean soldiers.[180]

The mass mobilization of the CCP-affiliated KIL and KVA, as well as the KPG-associated KRA, offered Manchurian Koreans an "ethnicized" political goal—to support the state-building in the Korean peninsula by establishing Korean political organizations or militias in northeastern China. Pak (from Yanbian) recounts that shortly after he returned to his home in the countryside of Yanbian in 1946, a group of KVA passed through in his village. Pak was astounded to find that the KVA soldiers, staying in villagers' houses, helped to draw water from wells in the morning, sweeped courtyards, and spoke with villagers as equals, which completely contradicted his image of the behavoir of an army back in the Manchukuo era. Pak was deeply inspired by the KVA. He praised it as " really a people's army," and soon chose to join it.[181] Pak admits that there were just two reasons that informed his decision to join the KVA: the equal interpersonal relationships and his will to fight for the independence of Korea.[182] Even when he later went to fight in the Korean War with his troop, he understood the Korean War as a continuous war to "liberate" the southern part of Korea, rather than the Party-state propaganda of "defending *our* country" (*baojia weiguo*).[183]

Another interviewee surnamed Pak (Xinbin) describes that when the KVA arrived, Koreans in Xinbin 新賓 were thrilled and actively volunteered to participate. It is said that among the Korean population of around 100,000 in Xinbin, over 10,000 joined the KVA.[184] Pak comments with pride, "10 percent of the population joined the army. This can rarely be found in

[180] Sun, ibid., 654-660.
[181] Kang, ibid., 1:20-22.
[182] Ibid., 1:21.
[183] Ibid., 1:22.
[184] Ibid, 1:144-145.

the history of war in the world…*we* have contributed so much to *this* country's liberation." Similar to Pak (Yanbian), Pak (Xinbin) makes distinctions between "our liberation"—referring to the independence of Korea—and "this country's liberation." This "ethnically" dichotomized meaning of *fanshen*/liberation remained in ethnic Koreas' memories. Pak recalls that at the time, among the KVA soldiers, many were reluctant to die on Chinese soil and felt ambivalent about becoming a Chinese citizen or a CCP member.[185] Some KVA cadres even publicly announced that Koreans should not sacrifice their lives to the Chinese revolution but should instead fight for Korea's independence.[186] As another interviewee, surnamed Chŏng, summarizes, "no matter whether participating in the CCP army or the KMT army, our Koreans in northeastern China all fought for one goal—the independence of Korea."[187]

Parallel to the growing sense of "liberation for Koreans," was the emergence of ethnicity-based self-governing associations and social organizations, which seized local power under the support of the Soviet occupation army in Korean-majority eastern Manchuria. Starting in late August 1945, Koreans in the Yanbian region founded labor unions, farmers unions, youth unions, and women unions. Then, in late September, Kang Sin-t'ae 姜信泰, a former Korean military officer in the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army (NAJUA), ordered these organizations to be integrated into a single Yanbian People's Democratic League 延邊人民民主大同盟 (YPDL). Before the arrival of CCP cadres from Yan'an, the YPDL served as the de facto local self-government with its own armed forces. However, as the most influential social organization in post-liberation Yanbian, the YPDL was dominated by Koreans, with around

185 Ibid, 1:146.
186 "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:153-154.
187 Kang, ibid., 1:194.

137,000 Korean members, compared to merely 8,000 Chinese members.[188] In the Yanbian provisional committee of the Chinese Communist Party, established in late October 1945 by the YPDL, 99% of the party members were Korean.[189] In the Yanbian region, the CCP's only local armed force was the three battalions of Korean youth recruited by the YPDL.[190] In this sense, the YPDL completely replaced the Manchukuo-era regime, which was run mostly by the Japanese and Chinese, with the Korean-dominant new trinity of Party, government, and army. Hence, under the CCP's support, Koreans substantially "turned themselves over" on the stage of local politics.

Similar processes of *fanshen* for the Koreans in the post-Manchukuo local order took place in almost all Korean-inhabited regions and was always accompanied by the "ethnicization" of the local Party-state branch. In another region with large Korean population, Mudanjiang, the Korean People's Association 高麗人民協會 (*minxie*), founded in early September 1945, drew almost all Korean residents 18 and above into its organization.[191] When the CCP cadres, led by Li Jingpu 李荊璞, arrived in Mudanjiang in November 1945, they had to rely on the CCP local branch established by the former NAJUA Korean military officer Kim Kwang-hyŏp 金光俠 and Mudanjiang Korean National Liberation League 牡丹江朝鮮民族解放同盟 (re-organized from the *minxie*). With the help of local Koreans, the Yan'an cadres were able to consolidate the CCP's power in Mudanjiang and recruited the CCP armed force consisting of almost all Koreans.[192] In Dunhua county 敦化, next to Yanbian, the CCP cadres from Yan'an also had to

[188] *Yŏnbyŏn minbo*, Feb 20, 1946.
[189] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:707. Kang Sin-t'ae was the secretary, with other YPDA cadres serving as leading members. The leaders of the provisional committee, however, were soon replaced by cadres sent from Yan'an in mid-November.
[190] Ibid, 5:26-28.
[191]*Mudanjiang wenshi ziliao*, 2:27.
[192] *Mudanjiang wenshi ziliao*, 2:1-23; Sun, ibid., 657.

build the Party branch on the basis of the Korean-dominant Liberation League, while the local Han Chinese supported the Han-leading local self-government (*weichihui*).[193] In Jilin and Yongji 永吉, the Korean Liberation League helped the CCP to mobilize local Korean youth, as the local CCP army was mainly comprised of Koreans.[194] Due to the remarkable presence of Koreans in local politics, the CCP Northeast Bureau created special Korean committees under local CCP branches, such as in Mudanjiang and Jilin.[195]

The turmoil of the Chinese civil war completely devastated the Manchukuo-era illusion of *minzu xiehe* (concordia of ethnos) and instead strengthened the interpersonal relationships among the Korean community based on their growing embrace of "Korean ethnicity." Initially for the purpose of self-protection, the Koreans eagerly engaged themselves with the "ethnicized" local political mobilization, which laid a basis for the "ethnicized" remembering of *fanshen*. On one hand, the activities of the Korean political organizations in post-Manchukuo northeastern China clearly pointed out an "ethnicized" political pursuit—for the sake of Korean independence—which strengthened the Manchurian Koreans' sense of "ethnic bonding" with the Korean peninsula. This form of "ethnicized" mobilization rendered the collective memory of *fanshen* via an ethno-nationalist discourse, instead of through the frame of class struggle. On the other hand, the CCP's ethnicity-based mass mobilization and Party-state building in northeastern China shaped an "ethnicized" local politics during the civil war. In the eyes of ethnic Koreans, the ethnicized "new world" brought by the CCP created unique meanings for the memories of *fanshen*, entailing a wide range of "transformations" for them to be in a privileged position in the history of modern China—devoting indispensable contribution to the CCP's development in the

[193] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:112-114.
[194] *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 4:157-170.
[195] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:147-152.

Northeast. Through remembering the "ethnicized new world," ethnic Koreans forged their "own" historical memory as well as a new sense of identity, no longer belonging completely to the Korean peninsula nor identical with other northeastern Chinese.

"Re-presenting" Ethnicity

On the basis of the common war suffering as well as the political upheaval, the fledging "ethnic Korean" community put great efforts into materializing the "essence of ethnicity" (*minzuxing*, 民族性) through culture. From the perspective of the CCP, the decades of Manchukuo education had "poisoned" young generations of Koreans in Manchuria and driven the "essence of Korean ethnicity" to the brink of extinction. The way to counter the Japanese imperialists' repression of *minzuxing* was to help Koreans "restore" their Koreanness. Thereafter, with the help of the CCP, a new ethnic culture, claimed to be a retrieval of *minzuxing*, was reified through a wide range of cultural symbols, encompassing everything from flags, commemoration, and education to mass media. This section analyzes how these cultural symbols, originating during the civil war period, became *les lieux de mémoire* of ethnic Koreans and shaped their imagination of ethnic identity.

On August 18, 1945, hearing that the Soviet troops had entered Yanbian, Han T'aek-su went to the streets in Yanji to join the welcome parade for the Soviet army. Han recalls how he was so excited and "burst to tears" when seeing the flag of Korea (*T'aegŭkki*, 太極旗) being raised at the town square. Han yelled out with the crowd, "Long live Korean independence!" "From now on, at long last our country is restored!" "Our flag!"[196] After Han returned to his village, he created his own *T'aegŭkki* on a white cloth and hung it on a tree. When some villagers

[196] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:4.

asked him if that was the flag of Korea, Han told them, "Yes. This is our country's flag. We held that flag and participated in the March 1 movement."[197] Yi Kuk-sun, living in Huadian county 樺甸 at the time of August 1945, also remembers that the Korean villagers came together after the surrender of Japan and raised the flag of *T'aegŭkki*.[198] Therefore, the *T'aegŭkki* was integrated into the collective memory of ethnic Koreans as a representative cultural symbol—that is, a *lieu de mémoire*. The flag itself embodied the history of the Korean independence movement taking place on the Korean peninsula. When it appeared in Manchuria after the surrender of Japan, as Han's story implies, many Koreans in Manchuria did not have much understanding as to what the flag symbolized. Therefore, rather than retrieving "our flag," the Manchurian Koreans' celebration of the *T'aegŭkki* redefined and reified the term "our" by appropriating for themselves the historical memory from another time-space into their new imagination of "our ethnicity."

The "commemorative phenomena," to invoke Pierre Nora's words, of the Manchurian Korean communities during the civil war period are also noteworthy for materializing their "ethnicity." On February 27, 1946, the YPDL summoned Korean representatives from all social organizations in the Yanbian region to prepare for a massive commemoration of the March 1 anniversary. The YPDL stated that March 1 is a day that "no Koreans should forget about" and the commemoration is to "consolidate this understanding among ordinary people."[199] In the memory of Pak (Xinbin), the March 1 commemoration remarks had special meanings because that was not merely the day on which Pak joined the KIL in Xinbin, but also the moment at which he "received new education," that is, for the first time, Pak learned about the history of the March 1 Movement. [200] Thus, the "new education" of commemoration in Pak's words referred to

[197] Ibid., 5:7.
[198] Yi et al., *Chungguk yŏnbyŏn chosŏnjok kusul seanghwalsa*, 70.
[199] *Yŏnbyŏn minbo*, Feb 28, 1946.
[200] Kang, ibid., 1:145-146.

a new conceptualization of "ethnicity," via constructing a "ethnic past" that originated from the Korean peninsula. Such commemorative practices, in which the peninsula was treated as the "ethnic root," were later officially incorporated into the CCP Party-state's ethnic policy. A pamphlet entitled, "Explanation of Various Commemorative Days," published in 1948 in Yanbian, provided a thorough guide to the commemorations for ethnic Koreans. In the pamphlet, the March 1 movement, along with other historical events taking place on the Korea peninsula (establishment of the People's Committee, land reform, etc.), were listed as the commemorative days for Manchurian Koreans.[201] Although few Korean emigrants in Manchuria participated in or even knew about the March 1 Movement, its commemoration reveals the construction of their "ethnicity" by imagining, or inventing, a fictitious historical relationship of Manchurian Koreans with their "ethnic motherland."

Ethnicity was further emphasized under the new notion of "ethnic education." Demolishing the multi-ethnic schools during the Manchukuo period, Manchurian Koreans now re-established their own "ethnic schools" (*minzu xuexiao*). These new "ethnic schools" only admitted students of "Korean ethnicity"; the previous Japanese and Chinese teachers were immediately replaced by Korean teachers.[202] The remarkable growth of "ethnic schools" is testified to by the case of Yanbian, where the number of middle schools doubled within one year after 1945 and 95.4 percent of the middle school students were Korean.[203] To root out the "pernicious influence" of the "enslaving education of Manchukuo," in the new textbooks used in these ethnic middle schools, the history and geography of Manchuria, which had been taught

[201] Chŏn, *Kakchong kinyŏmil yak'ae*.
[202] For example, in Longjing, the previous Longjing National Advanced School 龍井國民高等學校 was dismantled and reformed into two Korean schools, Tonghŭng and Taesŏng; another Longjing Women's National Advanced School was re-organized into Myŏngsin Women's Middle School. See *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 6:2-33; 5:158-160.
[203] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:516.

back in the Manchukuo years, was replaced by those of the Korean peninsula.[204] Some schools even directly adopted textbooks published in North Korea.[205] To "restore the original culture of Korean ethnicity," the Korean education community in Yanbian began to establish an "ethnic university" (which later became Yanbian University) as early as in October 1945. Although, due to the civil war, the preparation work was not formalized until early 1948, producing "ethnic talents" imbued with "ethnic spirit" still served as the foremost principle of the establishment of Yanbian University.[206] Such "ethnic education" reified the imagination of "ethnicity" within social institutions, which in turn supported the ethnic imagination. In other words, the emergence of "ethnic education" during the Chinese civil war was integrated into the ethnic Koreans' memories of *fanshen* in the form of a cultural symbol of the newly constructed *minzuxing*.

Beyond commemorations and education, Koreans in Manchuria after the collapse of Manchukuo put great efforts into establishing their "ethnic culture" through the mass media. In Yanbian, the regional newspaper in the Korean language, *Hanmin ilbo*, was published in September 1945 and was then taken over by the YPDL as its official newspaper, *Yŏnbyŏn minbo*. Later, although this newspaper was put under the control of the CCP, *minzuxing* (the essence of ethnicity) still served as one of its central principles.[207] Similarly, "*minzuxing*" was underlined as the guiding principle of the Korean-language Yanbian People's Broadcasting Station (founded in 1948), as most of the programs were broadcast in the Korean language.[208] In Yanbian and Mudanjiang, the cultural work troupes, which originally worked for the Korean-led political organizations and which were later absorbed into the CCP local governments, predominantly

[204] Ibid., 5:518.
[205] *Mudanjiang wenshi ziliao*, 6:75.
[206] Yŏm, *Tto hana ŭi Hanguk chŏnjaeng*, 214-223.
[207] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:513-515. Also see *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 9:297-300.
[208] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:520-521.

consisted of ethnic Koreans. The "ethnic" dramas, songs, and dances they performed were largely borrowed from the folk culture originating in the Korean peninsula.[209] In some regions, the KVA's propaganda teams produced new "ethnic cultural works," including various songs and dramas based on Koreans' anti-Japanese struggles in Manchuria.[210] From the ethnic Koreans' newspapers, broadcast radio, and performing arts, we can see that, in Benedict Anderson's terms, "the steady onward clocking of homogeneous, empty time" and "the particular language field" of mass media formed the "visible invisibility" of ethnic consciousness.[211] The construction of "ethnic culture" by the Manchurian Koreans via mass media invigorated the collective project of imaging and remembering ethnicity and became an indispensable part of their civil war memories.

The new discourse of *minzuxing* nurtured the Manchurian Koreans' transformation from "Korean people" (韓人) into "ethnic Koreans" (朝鮮族), a cultural legitimacy constructed through "retrieving" the "essence of ethnicity" from the brink of extinction, which, it was claimed, had been the goal of the Japanese colonialists. Compared to war suffering or political upheaval, the "re-presentation" of "ethnic culture" provided more concrete embodiment of the self-perception of "ethnicity." A sense of "ethnicity" was implanted into the everyday life of the Koreans through commemorations, education, and mass media. The "resurrected" *minzuxing* not merely connected their historical memories with their "ethnic origin" from the Korean peninsula, but also integrated the Korean communities over all of northeastern China into the ongoing course of the Chinese civil war. In other words, the "re-presentation" of "ethnicity" appropriated

[209] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:522-523; 5:528-530; 5:557-559. Also see Chaoxianzu jianshi bianxiezu, *Chaoxianzu jianshi*, 249-251. For insightful discussions on the relations between arts and nation-building, see Wilcox, *Revolutionary Bodies*.
[210] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 5:533-549.
[211] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9-46.

the main narrative line of ethnic Koreans' collective memory and therefore maintained the legitimacy of their group identity by turning those culture symbols of commemorations, education, and mass media into *les lieux de mémoire* for generations of "ethnic Koreans."

Conclusion

On the New Year of 1946, the CCP's vice governor of the Yanbian region, Dong Kunyi 董崑一, proposed, "Koreans who want to join the Chinese nationality can do so, becoming citizens of the Republic of China. In this manner, Koreans could become an ethnic minority group of the Chinese nation."[212] Accordingly, scholars conventionally viewed the period from the collapse of Manchukuo to September 1952, when the establishment of Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture was officially announced, as a transition of Manchurian Koreans' national identity (國家認同). There have been rich studies on the process through which the Manchurian Koreans' perception of national identity went from "Korean" (朝鮮人/韓人) to Chinese (中華民族). This study, in contrast, has inquired into the transformation of their ethnic identification during the same period. This chapter in particular argues that the ethnicity of ethnic Koreans (*chaoxianzu*), which should not be taken for granted as primordial and unalterable, was a historized process, which in large part was a product of the construction of their collective memory during the Chinese civil war. Their collective memory of the civil war era represents an "ethnicized" conceptualization of *fanshen*, a term that references the creation of a "new world" via the CCP's revolution. In ethnic Koreans' memories, the "new world" brought by the Chinese civil war was "ethnicized"—by means of war trauma, ethnicity-based mass mobilization, and the

[212] Sun, ibid., 726.

rediscovery of ethnicity—which fostered a new sense of “Chinese-Korean” (*zhongguo chaoxianzu*) ethnic identity.

Emphasizing *minzu xiehe*, the Manchukuo rule had scattered and mixed Koreans in residences, schools, and work places with Chinese and Japanese. After the collapse of Manchukuo, shared suffering, discrimination, dislocation, and starvation became a crucible for the constitution of a new form of human bonding as ethnic Koreans. The wartime (re)-establishment of social relationships laid the groundwork for rapid development of Korean social and political organizations. The CCP’s strategy of “ethnic liberation” relied on these Korean communities and ironically resulted in “ethnicized” local politics, consisting of ethnicity-based political organization, military forces, and Party organs in northeastern China. Moreover, the initiatives to “restore” ethnic culture created *les lieux de mémoire*, conduits for the generation of ethnic imagination. Such memories of the “ethnicized” *fanshen* were not to result in a homogenous “Chinese-Korean” identity. In the framework of the nation-state, the two elements embedded in this new ethnic consciousness, the Korean ethno-origin and the Chinese nation family, are inevitably inconsistent. However, this study does not consider the Koreans’ ethnic imagination as cultural homogeneity but as an imagined boundary of ethnicity. The “ethnicized” new world drew demarcations between the collective memory of “ethnic Koreans” and that of other ethnic communities. In other words, not only *fanshen* itself, but the memory of *fanshen* also became “ethnicized.” The ethnicized collective memory reminds us that the Chinese civil war was not only a war between the CCP and the Nationalists, or a global rivalry between the capitalist and the socialist camps; it was also a process of internal heterogenization between different social groups. Gail Hershatter notes, “the Chinese revolution is illegible without attention to gender." As this chapter reveals, the history of the Chinese civil war in the northeast is equivalently illegible without attention to ethnicity.

4

The Unmaking of a "Model Minority"

In the evening of October 3, 1950, the paramount leaders of the CCP attended a special reception for the representatives of different ethnic groups in Beijing. At the time, although Tibet had not yet recognized the CCP government's claim of sovereignty and numerous indigenous peoples in the Southwest had not been "identified" into ethnic categories, representatives from the Uyghurs, Mongols, and Koreans were arranged to join the ceremony of the first anniversary of the PRC's establishment. During the reception, Mao Zedong asked Liu Yazi 柳亞子, a poet and Mao's friend, to write a poem in order to "record the spectacular occasion of the great ethnic unity." Liu wrote,

> Without one man who can take leadership,
> How could one hundred ethnos be united?
> —Liu Yazi, "Huanxisha"

Mao then left a "Poem for Liu Yazi" in a response to Liu's couplet.

> In a single cry, the rooster announces the dawn of the world.
> Song pours in on us from ten thousand corners
> and musicians from Yutian.
> —Mao Zedong, "Huanxisha—Poem for Liu Yazi"

Later, the poem is mostly known by the opeing line, "in a single cry, the rooster announces the dawn of the world" (一唱雄雞天下白), which metaphorically conveys that the CCP has liberated China, which geographically resembles the outline of "a rooster." But the context of Mao and Liu's poems is equally crucial in interpreting their meanings—the grandiose convention of various ethnic groups representing "ten thousand corners" (萬方) resonates with both the scenario of "ten thousand countries revere to Your Majesty" (萬國來朝) in imperial China and Sun Yat-sen's dream of the "Five Ethnos Republic" (五族共和). In Liu and Mao's language, the ethnic minority groups are not merely witnesses to the PRC's establishment, but they also are needed as living testimonies to a united multiethnic China thriving under the CCP's leadership, that is, the CCP's "model minorities."

The project of constructing "model minorities" in the early 1950s has not yet received much attention in studies of Maoist China. Conventionally, researchers in the PRC accept the official cliché of "model minority," in which ethnic minority groups achieved equality, autonomy, progress under the CCP's leadership after joining the PRC, as indesself-evident "truth," rather than constructed image. Scholars outside of PRC China, on the opposite side, tend to overlook the CCP's narrative of "model minority" purely as fabricated political propaganda covering up its brutal colonial violence against ethnic minority groups. Tibetan historian Tsering Shakya delineates the CCP's "socialist transformation" in Tibet during the 1950s as unwelcomed and devastating.[213] Charlene E. Makley's, *The Violence of Liberation*, uncovers the genderizing process of state violence beneath the Mao-era social upheavals of a local Tibetan community in Gansu Province.[214] In his *The Age of Wild Ghosts*, Erik Mueggler presents an ethnography of the

[213] Tsering, *Dragon in the Land of Snows*, chaps. 4-11. See also Wang and Tsering, *The Struggle for Tibet*.
[214] Makley, *The Violence of Liberation*, chaps. 1 and 2.

Mao-era violence and trauma based on his fieldwork in an ethnic minority community in southwestern China.[215] Also focusing on southwest China, Mireille Mazard's "Powerful Speech" analyzes how ethnic minority peoples appropriated the Party-state's narrative strategy to memorialize the traumatic Mao-era.[216]

Beyond the Tibetans or indigenous peoples in southwestern China, the Mongols constitute a more comparative case with that of the Koreans. Similar to the historical narrative of Manchurian Koreans, the Mongolian nationalists had developed a long history of revolutionary cooperation with the CCP since the 1920s. During the Chinese civil war, the Mongols devoted critical efforts to the triumph of the CCP, which was acknowledged with the establishment of the first ethnic autonomous region in China in 1947. However, the Mongolian communists, as well as the masses, experienced severe persecution during the Mao era, especially during the Cultural Revolution, which is even depicted by some scholars as "ethnically based genocide."[217] Accordingly, Uradyn E. Bulag ascribes the tragedy of the Mongols under socialist China to their "collaborative nationalism," for which they "unwittingly surrendered their decision-making power and autonomy" to outside forces.[218] Meanwhile, Bulag also insightfully reveals the intrinsic irreconcilability between the universalism implied in the CCP's class struggle theory and the particularism guaranteed by its ethnic policy, leading to the "failure of communism in dealing with ethnicity."[219] In Bulag's view, the suffering experienced by ethnic minority groups, at least in Inner Mongolia, was a result of the CCP's choice of class emancipation over ethnic entitlement.

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215 Mueggler, *The Age of Wild Ghosts*.
216 Mazard, "Powerful Speech."
217 See Woody, *The Cultural Revolution in Inner Mongolia*; Brown, *The Purge of the Inner Mongolian People's Party in the Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1967-69*. For Chinese-language scholarship, see Qi, *Neimeng wenge shilu*; Gao and Cheng, *Neimeng wenge fenglei*; Yang, *Meiyou mubei de caoyuan*.
218 Bulag, *Collaborative Nationalism*, 17.
219 Bulag, *The Mongols at China's Edge*, 131.

The ethnic Koreans in present-day China seem to perfectly conform with the CCP's imagination of "model minority," which took shape in the early 1950s. On one hand, the essence of ethnicity (*minzuxing*) is maintained among ethnic Koreans through language, custom, cuisine, songs, dances, etc. On the other hand, the ethnic Koreans demonstrate their loyalty to the Chinese state—as they live harmoniously with other ethnic groups, open to the mainstream Han Chinese culture, not seeking any form of separatism, and so forth. Hence, the ethnic Koreans are commonly extolled by the present-day Chinese government as "model minority" as both an ethnic group and a member of the multiethnic Chinese nation. The complex historical process, particularly during the late 1950s and the Cultural Revolution, of how ethnic Koreans successfully came to terms with this imagined "model minority" is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, the oral histories from ethnic Koreans explored in this study reveal voices that deviate from the discourse of the CCP-dominated "model minority." Although the Party-state strives to integrate ethnicity into its official ideological foundation, we see great resistance in ethnic Koreans' memories against such monopolization of the narrative.

This chapter examines how the ethnic Koreans remember their experiences of political campaigns during the early 1950s as "ethnicized" trauma. I argue that this "ethnicized" trauma is largely constructed through the "counter-memories" against the Party-state power in monopolizing the narratives of history and conceptualizing the imagination of "model minority." The discourse of "model minority" fails to provide the ethnic Koreans reconciliation with the sufferings they witnessed or experienced in the early socialist period, which they internalized as trauma due to their "ethnicity." In this sense, the ethnic Koreans' early-socialist-era trauma aligns with Jie Li's notion of "utopian ruins," consisting of both aspirations of revolutionary liberation and disillusionment with the mass sufferings.[220] Although Jie Li proposes that China faces a "crisis of witnessing," by which she means that the Chinese state's monopoly over memory-making media technologies obstructs testimony to trauma, this study is particularly exempted from this dilemma. Since some of my oral history sources are collected by South Korean researchers and published in South Korea, they are valuable in examining in-depth on "repressed memories" related to the traumatic events ethnic Koreans remember from the early socialist period.

Traitors or Heroes?

Four days after the Soviet army entered Manchuria, Mao Zedong delivered his speech, "Situation after the victory of the anti-Japanese war and our strategy," in a cadre meeting in Yan'an. In his speech, Mao proposed his well-known metaphor, "for all reactionary things, if you do not strike them, they will not fall. This is the same as sweeping the floor. If the broom does not reach to the dust, the dust will not go away itself."[221] To "sweep away the dust," in early October, the newly established CCP Northeast bureau outlined "severely suppressing *hanjian* (Chinese traitors) and enemy espionage," "mobilizing the masses for anti-traitor, anti-villain struggles," and "eradicating the residual power of the False Manchukuo" as the imperative goals in post-Manchukuo northeastern China.[222] Accordingly, the massive campaign under the name of "anti-traitor struggle" 反奸清算 was launched synchronously with the land reform movement in various CCP-occupied regions of northeastern China starting in late 1945.[223] Although the two

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[220] Li, *Utopian Ruins*, 1-24.
[221] Mao, *Mao Zedong xuanji*, 4:1131.
[222] "Peng Zhen zhuan" bianxiezu, *Peng Zhen nianpu*, 1:299-300.
[223] To be precise, the "land reform movement" was not officially launched until the May 4th Directive 五四指示 was announced by the CCP in May 1946. Before the spring of 1946, what was carried out in the Northeast countryside was the continuation of the "rent reduction" 减租减息 movement in the CCP-controlled regions during the Sino-

movements oftentimes intertwined and overlapped with each other, a distinction should be made between them—while the former followed the CCP's traditional language of class struggle, the latter pointed to a novel discourse of the "Chinese nation." Different from that of the Nationalists, the CCP's discourse of the "Chinese nation" incorporated into its revolutionary ideology a united multiethnic China standing up to its traitors. This paradigm of "revolutionary Chinese nation" fashioned "anti-traitor" as a significant identifier constitutive to the "model minority."

While the CCP's official history situates the Koreans in the same position as the Han Chinese as victims under Manchukuo's rule, the violence that ethnic Koreans encountered on account of being accused as accomplices to the Japanese remains vivid in their memories. In the eyes of local Chinese in northeastern China, all Koreans were evil accomplices of the Japanese colonialists, as many Korean emigrant peasants lived on the lands rented from the Japanese colonist companies, which were considered to have "plundered" lands from the Chinese peasants. In the Manchukuo government, although few Koreans were appointed as provincial- or county-level governors, a large number of them served as low-ranking bureaucrats and, especially, as policemen.[224] Moreover, as Chŏng remembers, the translators in the Japanese army, who were subject to the most ire from the local Chinese, were almost all Koreans; accounts by Yi and Kim confirm Chŏng's statement.[225] Our interviewees also recall that in schools, many Korean teachers were seen as advocates of Japanese colonialist education and

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Japanese war. See Chen, "Baofeng zhouyu." For comprehensive reviews of the land reform movement, see Pepper, *Civil War in China*; Hinton, *Fanshen*; Shue, *Peasant China in Transition*; Li, *Geming zhengdang yu xiangcun shehui*; Li, *Tudi gaige yu huabei xiangcun quanli bianqian*; Yang, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo jianguo shi yanjiu*, vol. 1.

[224] Kang, *Kiŏk sok ŭi Manjuguk*, 1:195; 2:12. The situation of Manchurian Koreans is reminiscent of that of bannermen (mostly the Manchus) in post-1911 Beijing. The bannermen in Beijing were largely recruited as policemen and low-rank bureaucrats during the late-Qing reforms and therefore faced great hostility from the Han Chinese masses after the collapse of Qing empire. See Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, chap 4.

[225] Kang, ibid., 1:195; 2:34; 2:70.

after the surrender of Japan, they were beaten to death by angry students.[226] The Koreans were referred to in the local Chinese language by the derogatory term, "*erguizi*" (second Japanese devils, 二鬼子) and "*gaoli bangzi*" 高麗棒子. Faced with such labels, according to Yi Kuk-sun's memories, almost all Koreans needed to take shelter in the countryside to not be killed by the Chinese masses.[227] Hence, violence and discrimination came to be an indelible trauma in the memories of ethnic Koreans, which renders the CCP's narrative of the "Chinese national unity" in the face of Japanese colonialism less acceptable to the ethnic Koreans.

After the CCP entered Manchuria, personal revenge was soon superceded by organized campaigns of "cleansing and retribution" (*qingsuan,* 清算) against Manchukuo-affiliated Koreans.[228] During late 1945, in various towns in Yanbian, including Toudaogou, Longjing, Taiyangqu, and Badaogou, tens of thousands of people attended the "mass meetings" (*qunzhong dahui*), in which the "Korean traitors" (*chaojian*), mainly Manchukuo bureaucrats, were publicly executed.[229] In April 1946, the Yanbian People's Democratic League established the "cleansing and retribution" committee in Longjing, and in the "public trial" held on April 28, several Korean "traitor landlords" were executed.[230] In the CCP's official narrative, these "publishments" to the "traitors" were undoubtedly justified and also greatly cheered by the masses. By contrast, what many ethnic Koreans remember is the intimidating violence the CCP

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[226] Kang, ibid., 1:149-150; 2:57.
[227] Yi et al., ibid., 70. Also see, Kang, ibid., 2:158-159.
[228] In fact, the trail and punishment of "traitors" after the Sino-Japanese war took place not only in the CCP-controlled "liberated area" but also in the vast region of southern China and Taiwan under the Nationalist government's rule. See Kushner, *Men to Devils, Devils to Men*; Chen, "Taiwan zhanhou chuqi de 'lishi qingsuan' (1945-1947)"; Lo, "Kangzhan shengli hou zhonggong chengshen hanjian chutan"; Hwang, "Wartime collaboration in question"; Musgrove, "Cheering the traitor."
[229] *Yanbian wenshi ziliao,* 1:2.
[230] *Longjing wenshi ziliao,* 3:7. See also Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, *Chungguk hanin ŭi yŏksa*, 190-93. According to the head of Yanbian Historical Research Institute, one of the "traitor landlords," Chŏng Sa-bin 鄭士斌, owned more than 30 percent of the hotels in Longjing by 1945 and was executed for his collaboration with the Japanese. *Tong-a ilbo*, April 1, 1989. More on Chŏng in the following paragraphs.

employed. In Yanji, the security department of the CCP army arrested a great number of Manchukuo bureaucrats, which caused massive anxiety among the local Korean community.[231] Kim (Mudanjiang) witnessed a brutal scene when the former head of his village's self-defense army was beaten almost to death and then dragged to the town gate to be shot.[232] Kim (Yanshou) describes that when the previous head of the Manchukuo's Agricultural Development Association 興農會 in Yanshou 延壽 was attacked during the campaign, he "suffered all things close to death."[233]

Besides Manchukuo bureaucrats, in the town of Longjing in the Yanbian region, a significant number of teachers and students in Korean middle schools were labelled as "reactionary" or "special agents" during the "*qingsuan*" campaign. The town of Longjing was the center of Koreans' anti-Japanese education before the establishment of Manchukuo and the tradition of Korean nationalist schools was revived immediately after the collapse of Manchukuo. From the CCP's point of view, however, these Korean nationalist schools, run by either pro-KMT activists or Korean Christian churches, threaten its monopolizing narrative of anti-Japanese struggles led by the CCP. Thus, the CCP arrested the principal as well as any affiliated personnel of the Myŏngsin Women's Middle School, run by the United Church of Canada, in late 1945.[234] A preeminent teacher of the Ŭnjin Middle School, run by the Presbyterianism Church in Canada, Yi T'ae-jun 李泰俊, together with the director of Tongch'un Hospital, Choi Kwan-sil 崔寬實, was charged by the CCP authority of mobilizing students of the Ŭnjin and Yŏngsin schools for "counter-revolutionary sabotage."[235] One of the directors of the

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[231] *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 9:48.
[232] Kang, ibid., 2:76.
[233] Ibid., 2:165.
[234] *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 5:159-160.
[235] *Longjing wenshi ziliao*, 3:6-7. For more information about Yi and Choi, see *Tong-a ilbo*, December 4, 1937. Although the CCP-published *wenshi ziliao* states that Yi and Choi's mobilization of support for the trusteeship of

Yŏngsin Middle School, founded by the Longjing Presbyterianism Church, Chŏng Sa-bin, was executed in the Longjing public trial on suspicion of "Japanese espionage."[236] These education figures purged by the CCP in fact were recognized as admirable "nationalist activists" in the eyes of the local Korean population for their participation in the Korean independence movement during the late 1920s.[237]

The Korean political activists associated with non-CCP nationalist organizations were claimed by the CCP as "traitors" needing to be "cleaned out." Following the collapse of Manchukuo, as we have seen, there were a notable number of "expatriate associations" 僑民會 organized by advocates of the Korean Provisional Government (KPG). In the CCP's eyes, as nationalist teachers, the supporters of the KPG, who maintained close cooperation with the KMT government, were equivalently "traitors" in opposition not merely to the CCP but also the "Chinese nation" it represented. Thereafter, labelling those non-CCP Korean activists as "KMT special agents" 敵特, the CCP was equally aggressive in its massive "cleansing" campaign launched against them. In Changchun, the KPG-supportive Northeast Korean People's Union (東北大韓民團, NKPU) was soon deemed by the CCP cadres to consist of "traitors and running dogs" 韓奸走狗 and was suppressed in October 1945.[238] The KPG-affiliated "Korean Expatriate Association" in Antu was demolished by the CCP local authority in 1947, with the main leader

Korea in January 1946 as "anti-communist," it seems more likely that Yi and Choi, in fact, mobilized for anti-trusteeship, which aligned with the position of the KPG and Korean nationalists, given the historical background that the Soviet Union, Korean communists, and the CCP all supported trusteeship in 1946. For political debates on Korean trusteeship, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 1:215-227. Another source confirms my interpretation, stating that Yi and Choi "carried out activities to support Syngman Rhee," which also aligned with the position of the KPG. See "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 105.

[236] For Chŏng's involvement in the Yŏngsin Middle School, see *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 6:49.

[237] For Yi, see *Tong-a ilbo*, January 15, 1926; *Chosŏn ilbo*, February 11, 1926; *Tong-a ilbo*, December 4, 1937. For Chŏng, see *Tong-a ilbo*, August 6, 1923.

[238] Yŏm, *Tto hana ŭi Han'guk chŏnjaeng*, 566-573.

executed.[239] Kang Sŏk-hun, an anti-Japanese activist and former member of the Korean Communist Party in the 1920s, implicitly reveals his resistance against the CCP's narrative. Kang was labelled "historically counterrevolutionary" for having later served in the KMT army and was subject to countless personal sufferings after the establishment of the PRC. Decades later, Kang sorrowfully summarizes, "it is my personal tragedy as a result of my previous history, but all have become bygones now, remaining memories that are no longer vivid."[240] Certainly, Kang's memories did not fade away as he recounted his "personal tragedy." Furthermore, the opportunity to write out his story can be seen as a kind of resistance against the CCP's monopolizing narrative after the Mao era reshaped ethnic Koreans' remembering of the "anti-traitor" campaign, in which the CCP's claim of "traitor" is contested.

Even the Korean activists who were connected to other Korean nationalist organizations were not safe from the cleansing campaign. During the Tonghua Incident in February 1946, six Korean activists sent down by the New Korean Democratic Party 新韓民主黨, a minority opposition party against the KPG, were arrested by the local CCP authority for "counter-revolutionary activities" and "KMT-Japanese espionage," as the CCP's official history declares.[241] One of the "traitors" executed in the Longjing public trial, Yi Kŭm-sŏk 李今石, turned out to be a nationalist activist, who was investigated by the Japanese police in 1921 for "anti-Japanese activities" and who had eagerly participated in the activities of the Longjing Youth Association, a local Korean nationalist youth organization, in the late 1920s.[242] According

239 *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 9:17.
240 *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 5:152.
241 Li, *Tonghua 'er・san' baoluan shijian shimo*, 7-8. The Tonghua Incident, called by the CCP as the "Tonghua February 3 Riot" (通化二三暴亂), was a local armed conflict between the CCP occupation authority and Japanese POWs, in which thousands of Japanese POWs and civilians lost their life. The CCP accused the KMT to be the plotter behind the scenes and began mass arrests of KMT-affiliated, or Japanese-affiliated, personnel in the Tonghua region.
242 *Chosŏn ilbo*, February 28, 1928. Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, *Han'guk tongnip undong sa charyo*, 38:308.

the CCP's narrative, when a unit of the Korean Volunteer Army (KVA) stopped by Kaiyuan 開原, a few Korean traitors set up a conspiracy to murder the KVA officers and were eventually executed.[243] The "leader" of the plot, named Yi Pong-ju 李奉柱, was in fact a journalist working for the prestigious Korean nationalist newspaper, *Tong-a ilbo*, during the Japanese colonial period.[244] To legitimate its purge of these peoples as "traitors," to both the Chinese and the Koreans, the Party-state needed to downplay their experiences as "nationalist activists," even as it centralized the Manchurian Koreans' nationalist movement in the discourse of the revolutionary "Chinese national unity." It was this inconsistency that resulted in the gap between the claims of the Party-state in the "anti-traitor" campaign and the way such events were remembered the ethnic Koreans who lived through them.

Although instances of "anti-traitor" sweeps were hardly uncommon in post-1945 China, the "anti-traitor" campaign in Manchuria became central to the CCP's discourse of ethnic Koreans as "model minority." While both the Nationalist government and the CCP regarded the trials of *hanjian* (Chinese traitors) as the ideological foundation of the Chinese state, the CCP's initiatives behind the anti-traitor campaign among Korean communities in northeastern China had another facet of significance—to build its political legitimacy of ruling ethnic minority groups on the basis of "punishing traitors." This narrative paradigm of a united and revolutionary "Chinese nation" is substantially contested by ethnic Koreans' traumatic memories of the "anti-traitor" campaign. The Korean nationalist activists got labelled by the Party-state as "traitorous to the Chinese nation" so they could be integrated into the discourse of anti-Japanese "national

[243] "Zhongguo chaoxianzu lishi zuji" bianji weiyuanhui, ibid., 62.

[244] *Tong-a ilbo*, April 11, 1933. It is highly likely that Yi was targeted by the CCP for his affiliation with the *Tong-a ilbo* faction of the Korean nationalists, which became the central political power supported by the U.S. occupation authority in post-1945 South Korea.

unity" under the CCP's leadership. Thus, in the narratives of ethnic Korean informants, "anti-traitor" is remembered as the Party-state's enforcement of its own historical interpretation; as a result, the state-denounced "traitors" are recouped as "nationalist activists." As Pak (Xinbin) comments mournfully, "our independence movement was treated (by the CCP) as a capitalist and nationalist movement, and therefore as reactionary. Many of those who had participated in the independence movement faced political persecution."[245] As the ethnic Koreans adopted the history of the "Korean independence movement" into the core of what it had come to mean to be "ethnically Korean," the CCP's "anti-traitor" campaign targeted at those "independence activists" undermined its discourse of the "model minority" in ethnic Koreans' memories.

"Model Minority" without Models

The *qingsuan* campaign targeting "pro-Japanese traitors" and non-CCP collaborators came to an end when the CCP secured its triumph in northeastern China in late 1948, but the suspicious gaze directed at ethnic Koreans from the Party-state did not easily subside. The CCP's mass mobilization in civil-war Manchuria had relied largely on the ethnic Korean communities, who provided the newly arriving CCP a key source of military manpower, cadres, local-level administration, propaganda, etc. During the early years of the PRC, however, to the fledging CCP organs in northeastern China, the loyalties of local Korean communists to the Party-state were still highly suspect because of both their previous involvement in the Manchukuo regime and their ongoing connections with the Korean peninsula, mainly the DPRK. Firstly, from the perspective of the CCP's tradition of inter-Party purges, merely living under the Manchukuo or KMT rule could constitute "uncertain" personal histories, which might later turn into a reason for

[245] Kang, ibid., 1:140.

prosecutions.[246] As discussed in earlier chapters, while the Korean nationalist activists had contributed remarkably to the CCP's expansion of power in Manchuria during the late 1920s and early 1930s, due to the suppression of such activity by the colonial authorities and internal conflicts, a majority of the Korean CCP members disengaged from the Party organizations and chose to live peacefully under Manchukuo rule. Although many of the former communists rejoined the the CCP after the fall of Manchukuo, as Pak (Yanbian) points out, their previous experiences were treated by the CCP as "capitulation" and "defection."[247]

The Yanbian People's Democratic League (YPDL), as the most influential political organization and de facto local government in the Yanbian region, was dissolved in August 1946. Although many orthodox PRC sources explain the dissolution of YPDL as having "completed its historical destiny after the democratic governments were established in the Yanbian region," Chi Hee-gyŏm 池喜謙, one of the main founders and leaders of YPDL, presents a different narrative in his memoir. Chi refers to the words of Zhou Baozhong 周保中, a major CCP leader in eastern Manchuria in 1946, contending that "the main leaders of the organization (YPDL) do not have reliable political backgrounds (政治面貌不純), and they need education and purging (淸洗)…"[248] In fact, starting in the summer of 1946, the local CCP army in Yanbian, consisting mainly of Koreans, launched a massive internal investigation for eight months and purged 4,000 "politically impure elements" (approximately 20 percent of the whole

[246] In the Yangtze delta during the Sino-Japanese war, as Timothy Brook points out, the collaboration between local Chinese elites with the Japanese occupation authority was a complex process involving different considerations from social security, economic benefits, to ideological orientation. Brook reveals that not all "collaborators" were simply culpable as the CCP claimed. The situation of Manchurian Koreans under Manchukuo is quite analogous. See Brook, *Collaboration*. For middle schools in Shanghai during the Mao era, Eddy U points out how one's family origin and personal history were given more weight in determining one's fate during the political campaigns than one's political ideas. See U, *Disorganizing China*.
[247] Kang, ibid., 1:29.
[248] *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 1:1.

army).[249] Subsequently, the CCP Jilin Province Committee directed organization of a "high-rank cadre school" (高幹班) in Longjing in May 1947, which was attended by 116 high-rank military officers and Party cadres in eastern Manchuria (115 of whom were Korean).[250] The central purpose of the school was to carry out "confined investigation" on the historical backgrounds of these cadres and the result was that only 19 of them remained in their positions.[251] As Chi recounts, "most of the YPDL cadres participated in the rectification (整風), in which their political historical problems were uncovered, and they were discharged from the Party and government. Only a few of them remained and most left their positions."[252] Even Chi himself was disappeared from the public propaganda thereafter.[253]

Under the name of "mass re-investigation" (大復查), the CCP branches in Korean areas carried out encompassing internal investigations.[254] In the 7th regiment of the KVA in eastern Manchuria, the personnel who had joined from Changchun were entirely labelled the "South Korean Syngman Rhee faction" and imprisoned for "espionage activities" later in Yanji.[255] Around the same time, the vice commander of the 7th regiment and also the principal of the Huadian Military and Political School, Choi Myŏng 崔明, was driven to suicide during the investigation of his "severe mistakes committed after liberation."[256] Accordingly, we can see that

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[249] *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 9:35-36.
[250] Sŭngni, 157-158.
[251] Ibid. In fact, "cadre school" (高幹班/學習班) was a common tool that the CCP applied in its internal purges or "rectification" campaigns (整風). Its history can be traced back to the Yan'an Recification Campaign. See Gao, *How the Red Sun Rose*.
[252] *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 1:9.
[253] Yŏm, ibid., 138.
[254] *Yanbian wenshi ziliao*, 9:103.
[255] *Huadian wenshi ziliao*, 5:10.
[256] *Huadian wenshi ziliao*, 5:10-11. It is still unknown if there was any connection between Choi's "mistake" and the purge inside the Huadian Military and Political School. Choi's high status in the KVA (as vice commander of the 7th regiment) renders his suicide quite startling and mysterious, while all historical documents seem to be extremely reticent on the backstory. One South Korean source even mistakenly suggests Choi returned to North Korea after 1946. See Kang and Sŏng, *Hanguk sahoe chuŭi undong inmyŏng sajŏn*, 491.

the founding fathers of the ethnic Koreans' "*fanshen*" (as discussed in chapter 3) mostly ended up being purged from the Party-state. In other words, to make ethnic Koreans into a "model minority," the Party-state had to firstly root out from the Party-state those Korean activists who mostly constituted the models for its "model minority"—with their participation in anti-Japanese struggles, socialist beliefs, and contribution to the CCP's revolution. The irony of a "model minority" discourse with an absence of Korean "models" left a lasting imprint in ethnic Koreans' memories.

While the official documents in China are rather reticent on the internal purges of Koreans, Kim (Mudanjiang) tells his family's traumatic story. Kim's uncle had participated in the CCP's anti-Japanese activities in the late 1920s and became the head of the village after the collapse of Manchukuo. During the 1947 campaign, however, Kim's uncle was accused by the Party organ of owning a great quantity of land during the Manchukuo period and concealing his land from the Party's land reform. Thereafter, although Kim's uncle voluntarily handed over all his land, he was discharged from the position of village head. When the working team was sent down to arrest him, he was "mistakenly shot to death" by the new head of his village.[257] Thinking of his uncle's death, Kim laughs wryly and complained, "even if we can accept that his (Kim's uncle) death is due to 'uncertain' reasons, what did they (the Party) do next? They do not even respect the truth. 'He deserves to die.' That is how they recorded his death."[258] Kim then expresses his remorse that he, as a former Party member, was not able to say anything to defend his piteous uncle and to help his uncle's family who were deprived of everything by the Party after his uncle had died. Kim himself was eventually purged from the Party. In Kim's account, his uncle's heroic participation in the anti-Japanese movement constitutes an extremely

[257] Kang, 2:78-79.
[258] Ibid., 2:80.

contradictory image to his ambiguous death. To the Party-state, even after the Mao era, it was deemed best not to reinvestigate the death of Kim's uncle for the sake of the "broader situation" of "national unity."[259] However, the Party-state's hegemonic power in narrating Kim's uncle as "deserving to die" scarred Kim's identification with "model minority." How can a model for a "model minority" come to be a nobody in history who "deserves to die" under the Party-state?

Similar tragedies took place everywhere. In the Mudanjiang region, Kim (Mudanjiang) recalls that almost all Korean principals of primary schools were attacked as "traitors to Chinese culture" (文化漢奸), although many of them, in Kim recollection, were "falsely charged." Kim defends for one of his acquaintances who had joined the CCP and supported "progressive" activities.[260] Pak (Xinbin) reveals that despite being a prominent and respected figure in the local Korean community and remaining in the region to cooperate with the CCP, a principal of the local Korean primary school was beaten to death by the CCP's working team merely on account of his former low-rank position in the Japanese-run *Mantaku* company.[261] One of Chŏng's (Fushun) favorite uncles served as a member in the military police during Manchukuo in order to provide cover for another of Chŏng's uncles who secretly participated in anti-Japanese activities. Later, Chŏng's uncle was reported by his nephews to the Party and his entire family was sent down to the countryside.[262] Chŏng's father was appointed as the head of the "Expatriate Association" in a small village when the KMT controlled the region. Although Chŏng believes his father did not commit anything nefarious, his father was "issued a counterrevolutionary cap"

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[259] Deng Xiaoping famously stated in late 1978 that "historical problems can only be treated ambiguously but should not be investigated thoroughly. To investigate thoroughly will take much time, which has no benefit. We should consider first the broader situation." The "broader situation," which commonly appears in Deng's language, refers to the harmony and unity (安定團結) of post-Mao China. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Deng Xiaoping nianpu*, 1:445.
[260] Kang, ibid., 2:129
[261] Ibid., 2:159.
[262] Ibid., 1:198.

and, as a result, Chŏng, then a loyal CCP cadre, was condemned as culpable during the "cadre investigation" campaign.[263] Even though tragic stories such as these were numerous in Mao-era China, in ethnic Koreans' memories, they represent a story of prosecution of "ethnic models." The respectable intellectuals with "progressive thoughts," the former anti-Japanese activists, and the loyal CCP cadres align with their imagination of "ethnic models," and however, are excluded from the Party-state's narrative of "model minority." Therefore, these sufferings are remembered as "trauma" as a result of the Party-state's refusal to recognize bottom-up voices.

Moreover, the CCP's suspicion of its Korean cadres was not merely a matter of settling past scores but, more critically, those of the present. Although the majority of local Korean communists were willing to cooperate with the CCP, the question as to whether such collaboration was a temporary stage for realizing Korea's independence or a pledge of allegiance to the new Chinese state remained largely equivocal for the Koreans in northeastern China from the civil war years to the early PRC period. According to many of the interviewees' accounts, the pursuit of Korean independence seems to have played a greater role in prompting them to join the CCP's side during the civil war.[264] This ambiguity of identification is a result of the particular history of Manchurian Koreans, but this particularity led to severe prosecutions under the CCP's rule. In the Korean Military and Political School in Huadian, students were dissatisfied with education about the Chinese revolution and stated, "we have no reason to contribute our life to China's revolution; we should fight for Korea's independence."[265] These students were immediately convicted of being "KMT agents" and executed. In Yanbian, the Han

[263] Ibid., 1:192. Although "cadre investigation" was constantly carried out within the Party since the early years of the CCP, the massive "cadre investigation movement" (審幹運動) was launched in late 1953 in several provinces, including Chŏng's Liaoning province. See Huang, "Jiangsu sheng wushi niandai zhongqi de ganbu shencha."
[264] Ibid., 1:21-22; 1:145; 1:194.
[265] Sŭngni, 153-154. These students were later accused of "KMT sabotage" and "received people's trials."

Chinese cadres from Yan'an viewed the preponderance of Koreans in the local Party, government, and army with great suspicion. As one main leader of the YPDL, Mun Chŏng-il 文正一, implies, an important reason behind the purge of the YPDL members turned out to be the suspicion on the Koreans' loyalty to the Chinese state from the Han Chinese leader, Kong Yuan 孔原, and his wife, Xu Ming 許明.[266]

Another case from Mudanjiang illustrates the CCP leadership's distress at the growing ethno-nationalism of local-level Korean cadres. As discussed in chapter 3, the Korean activists played a central role in consolidating the CCP's rule in the Mudanjiang region during the civil war. One of the key figures in this movement was Kim Tong-ryŏl 金東烈, who had once been arrested for leading the CCP's anti-Japanese movement and later came to be employed in a semiofficial local agricultural company during the late Manchukuo era. During the Soviet occupation, Kim was appointed as the chairman of the Korean People's Association (KPA), as well as the vice mayor of Mudanjiang. After several cadres from Yan'an arrived in the city, the leaders of the KPA, including An Si-ung 安時雄, Im Han-song 林寒松 (Im Song), and Yi Song-u, remained on in important positions in the CCP's regime. Nevertheless, the KPA-affiliated cadres demonstrated a strong ethno-nationalist tendency by worshipping Kim Il Sung as the leader of the Manchurian Koreans and directing the Koreans in Mudanjiang to follow Kim Il Sung's instructions.[267] As the KPA cadres' activities fundamentally challenged the CCP's authority, even sovereignty, over the Mudanjiang region, Kim Tong-ryŏl was publicly

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[266] Yŏm, ibid., 173. Kong Yuan served as the vice deputy of the CCP's Central Social Department (the CCP-equivalent of the Soviet Union's secret police department of GPU) in 1939. When Kong was sent to the Northeast, he first worked in the Social Department of the CCP Northeast Bureau and then was appointed as the leader of Yanbian region in early 1947. It is reasonable to assume that Kong's appointment reflects more or less the Party leadership's intention to purge the ethno-nationalist Korean leaders in the Yanbian region during the 1947 campaign.
[267] Ibid., 326-347.

denounced in January 1948. According to a statement by Yu Hui Jae, a Korean resident living in Mudanjiang during the time, Kim was almost beaten to death in December 1947, and in the subsequent public trial in 1948, Kim was sentenced to death.[268] Other KPA cadres, such as An Si-ung, Im Song and Yi Song-u, were all purged around the same time. The fortune of Korean leaders in Mudanjiang precisely demonstrates how "ethnic models" fell as the "dust" of history during the process of making "model minority." In ethnic Koreans' memories, the discourse of "model minority" could not provide satisfying explanations for the purges of these once honorable Korean communists, but a hegemonic Chinese state could. Therefore, such intra-party purges, although not unlike those prevalent throughout Mao's China, became traumatized as "ethnic prosecution" in the memories of ethnic Koreans.

Conclusion

When Mao Zedong and Liu Yazi jubilantly envisioned the scenario of various ethnic minority groups coming together under the leadership of the CCP in that evening in October of 1950, they surely could not have predicted that their utopia of "model minorities" would collapse within a few years in the first half of the 1950s. Mao's poetic picture of "euphoric songs from thousand corners" turned into consecutive unrest challenging the CCP's rule from its multiethnic frontiers by the late 1950s. Thereafter, the CCP launched a massive campaign of "ethnic rectification" (民族整風) in 1959, which largely symbolizes the inception of its hardline ethnic policy of socialist reform and cultural assimilation. Based on the great sufferings of ethnic minority groups during the late Mao era, scholars oftentimes teleologically rationalize the failure

[268] ATIS interrogation report no. 4352. Yu Hee Jae (柳熙在) fled to Seoul in 1948 and was captured by the United States during the Korean War as a soldier of the "volunteer force."

of the CCP's ethnic policy as inevitable but rarely regard the CCP's imagination of "model minorities" as a serious subject to study. In this chapter, I explore the incongruence between the CCP's discourse of "model minority" and ethnic Koreans' memories with regard to that very discourse. Looking into this incongruence in remembering the early 1950s, I argue that this contradiction was an outcome of the Party-state intrusive monopolization of the "model minority" discourse and subsequent resistance from below.

During the early years of the PRC, "anti-traitor" became a powerful narrative for consolidating national unity, beyond class status or ethnic identity, against the common enemies of the Japanese or the KMT. The CCP's publishment of "traitors" was not merely for the sake of the Party, but for the revolutionary "Chinese nation." In this paradigm of "model minority," the Party-state obtains the political legitimacy via leading the ethnic minority groups—as a response to the ethnic minority's bottom-up appeals to punish the common "traitor" of the "Chinese nation." In contrast, in ethnic Koreans' memories, the claimed "traitors" of the Chinese nation turn out to be remembered as "heroes" of their ethnic community. The Party-state's hegemonic power in rendering "ethnic heroes" into "national traitors" traumatized the ethnic Koreans' memories of the "anti-traitor" campaign. Meanwhile, the official narrative of "model minority" intentionally mutes the suffering stories of the CCP's Korean collaborators in the early PRC period. While these Korean political leaders and intellectuals are seen by the ethnic Korean masses as "models" of the ethnicized narrative of *fanshen*, the CCP's dominant interpretive power in purging them as "impure" has deeply haunted the ethnic Koreans for decades. The fall of "ethnic models" results in the CCP's narrative of "model minority" without "models," which is clearly contested by the memories of ethnic Koreans. With such incongruent interpretations of “traitor” and “model,” the CCP’s imagination of “model minority” has come to be remembered as a “road to nowhere.”

Conclusion

Sixty years after the establishment of the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in 2012, Yi Kuk-sun, an ordinary ethnic Korean resident spoke to the oral history collectors from South Korea, "now in Yanji (the capital of Yanbian region), there is no difference between Han Chinese and ethnic Koreans. Everyone eats Kimchi, soybean paste, and cold noodles…We are almost assimilated. The only reason we are able to maintain our '*ethnicity*' (*minzuxing*) is because of the presence of (South) Korea. Without our country, we would truly be assimilated."[269] Yi did not overstate ethnic Koreans' current situation in the re-sinicized Manchuria. Decades after the Japanese colonialist rule, Manchuria, the present-day "Northeast," appears to be "more Chinese" than many other peripheral regions, having been integrated into the Chinese state for centuries. Since the 1990s, the cultural symbols of the Northeast, such as Errenzhuan, Northeastern Mandarin, floral printed patterns, Northeastern cuisine, etc., have flooded the cultural industries in China. As Yi reminds us, the image of "the Northeast" is implemented so deeply into the embodiment of the homogenous "China" that most Chinese people have nearly forgottent that "the Northeast" was/is a multiethnic, multicultural borderland. Situated between the emerging nation-states of China and (the two) Koreas, the ethnic Koreans in northeastern China, as well as their historical narratives, have long been otherized in the canonical history on either side. Therefore, to retrieve the voices of ethnic Koreans themselves, as the marginalized, from their dissipating memories is one of my foremost motivations throughout this thesis.

[269] Yi et al., ibid., 73-74.

Looking into the narratives from the perspective of memory is not to imply that they can be taken uncritically as history. French historian Jacques Le Goff incisively points out that "memory, on which history draws and which it nourishes in return, seeks to save the past in order to serve the present and the future."[270] Memory, bound with history, reflects an ongoing project of a social group to construct connections with its past, a society's "regimes of historicity," as François Hartog puts it. Being aware of the "regimes of historicity" behind memory, this study problematizes both the static view of "ethnic Koreans" as primordial "Koreans" or the constructed subcategory of *Zhongguo Chaoxianzu* under the "Chinese nation." I contend that ethnic Koreans' identification with "our ethnicity," to which Yi refers, needs to be historized as a complex process in the context of twentieth-century northeastern China. Accordingly, this research enquires into the interrelationship between the imagination of ethnicity and the construction of memory. Within the time scope of this thesis, from the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932 to the mid-1950s, I argue that the ethnic Koreans' conceptualization of "ethnicity" underwent three different stages: as *minzu xiehe* (concordia of ethnos), as *fanshen* (turning over), and as "model minority." The making of "ethnic Koreans" from cosmopolitan—if colonial—Manchukuo subject to the "model minority" of the Peoples' Republic of China took place within the context of the broader social upheavals in modern China across the 1949 divide. Studying this process of "ethnicity" enriches our understanding of not only how China transformed into a nation-state but, more importantly, how this multiethnic nation-state was—and still is—interpreted in the eyes of one ethnic minority.

Collective memory plays a crucial role in shaping the imagination of "ethnicity." As Jan Assmann notes, "the socialization process enables us to remember, but the converse is also true:

[270] Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 99.

our memories help us to become socialized."[271] Assmann's socialization refers to the bonds that cohere individuals and, consequently, imbue them with a sense of belonging. This thesis, asserting that ethnicity takes shape through social grouping, applies this insight to reflect upon the interrelation between memory and ethnic identity. In particular, this study has analyzed how the three critical stages in the complex process by which ethnic Koreans' imagination of group identity intersected with the collective memory of their experiences from Manchukuo to Mao's China. As shown, during the Manchukuo era, the discourse of *minzu xiehe* obscured ethnic consciousness as rigid classification, thereby fostering fluid and circumstantially contingent identities of belonging for ethnic Koreans.

Following the collapse of Manchukuo, the civil war turbulence in northeastern China led ethnic Koreans to forge social ties, as well as self-rule, on the basis of ethnic communities. This process of ethnicization became the foundation, as well as the function, of memories related to *fanshen*. To ethnic Koreans, their "ethnicized" collective memory of *fanshen* was built on their re-imagination of ethnicity, but also served as the mediator, with various "*les lieux de mémoire*," to reify the ethnic label of *chaoxianzu*. As the CCP took control of the ethnic Korean communities, the Party-state auspiciously envisioned a new "ethnicity" as "model minority" for the Koreans as faithful, progressive, and participatory in the building of the new regime. However, the Party-state's exercise of power in monopolizing the ethnic Koreans' historical narrative substantially traumatized their remembering of political campaigns in the early 1950s. From the perspective of Koreans living in Northeast China, the "anti-traitor" and intra-Party purifications in the name producing a "model minority" are recollected as ethnic prosecutions of "nationalist heroes" and "communist models." As a result, the ethnic imagination of "model

[271] Assmann and Livingstone, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 4.

minority" advanced by the CCP failed by the end of the 1950s; moreover, the experience remains as an uncured trauma for ethnic Koreans, which drives them to articulate their memories as resistance against the marginalization in the Party-state's official history.

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